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# CURRENTS

*A QUARTERLY REVIEW  
to explore the implications  
of Christianity for our times*

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KARL JASPERS • PAUL TILlich • SIMONE WEIL  
COUTURIER • TODD • ONG • WEIGEL

## CONTENTS

Vol. II, No. 3—SPRING 1952

On the Chapel at Vence	M. A. COUTURIER	1
The Importance of Kierkegaard	KARL JASPERS	5
The Lady and the Issue	WALTER J. ONG	17
The Apostolate of the Laity	JOHN M. TODD	27
Jewish Influences on Contemporary Christian Theology	PAUL TILlich	35
The Meaning of the Moment	GUSTAVE WEIGEL	43
Beyond Personalism	SIMONE WEIL	59
Notes on other Publications		77

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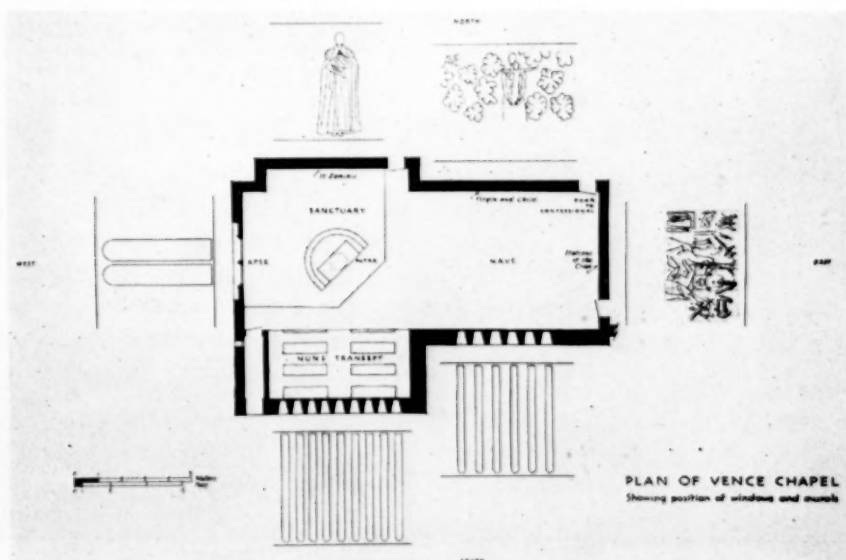




*View of Vence Chapel showing windows and  
nuns' transept and spire with cross and bell.*

Photo Hélène Adant

*Photographs from the book "Matisse, His Art and His Public"  
by Alfred H. Barr, Jr., published by the Museum of Modern Art.*





MATISSE. CHAPEL AT VENICE—Interior looking toward Stations. Altar cloth with fish design at left; nuns' stalls at right.  
Photo Hélène Adant  
*Photographs from the book "Matisse, His Art and His Public" by Alfred H. Barr, Jr., published by the Museum of Modern Art.*

## ON THE CHAPEL AT VENCE

M. A. COUTURIER

TOWARD the end of the afternoon of June 25, when the stream of visitors and friends had subsided and there were no more than two or three nuns at prayer in their stalls, we could feel how full of spiritual riches was this chapel at Vence. It is vain to hope that photographs or words can suffice to evoke what is diffused there, silently, from the whiteness of the walls, the purity of the colors, the nobility of the proportions. However carefully we have chosen these images, what we give here can serve only as a guide or reference. Let those who still doubt what can be the dignity and spiritual power of forms go themselves to Vence. There they will see with their own eyes what may be brought to the soul and the heart by the beauty of those things among which we live.

*These notes on the chapel completed last year by Henri Matisse appeared in the July-August 1951 issue of L'ART SACRÉ, of which Father Couturier is one of the editors.*

Still, many of our readers will not go soon to Vence, and even many visitors, ill-prepared, seeing the chapel only at the hours when the public is admitted and streaming through without time for contemplation, would like "explanations", and demand to "understand" what at first baffles and shocks them. For their sake we resort to giving explanations, still remembering that in these domains the essential is never explained: here nothing is ever attained except through personal intuition—that is to say, finally, through a communion in which the beholder sees only after the manner of what he is, and receives only to the degree that he gives himself. Ideas matter very little; more often, it is not the ideas, but the very depth of a being and a whole life which would have to be changed in order that one might become again responsive and open oneself to what is very simple and very pure.

I BELIEVE Matisse has been fascinated all his life by what is the true "magic" of painting: its ability to transform space by the play of color and line. Often he takes a sheet of paper and traces several lines upon it: "you will see the white is no longer the same at the right . . . the proportion has changed." I believe he also said one day: "I do not work on the canvas but on the man who is looking at it." There is no conjuring in all this, only an incomparable instinct for plastic means and their spiritual powers.

Four years ago it was no longer only canvas and paper but a monument that he was able to transfigure in this way. Immediately his plan was made specific: "to take an enclosed space, strictly reduced in proportion, and to give it, by the play of line and color, infinite dimensions." Go to Vence, remain there in silence during hours of solitude; you will feel that in this very small chapel the real dimensions signify nothing: the perfection of forms overcomes the limitations of space.

This is accomplished through the exactitude of certain thrusts and balances: two walls of intense and luminous color balance two others that are plain and white, covered only by large black line drawings. At certain hours of the day, the reflections of the windows, mingled with the black tracings on the glossy tiles, disturbs this equilibrium and prevents the possibility of its remaining too static. Everything here is a result of the relation of one thing to another, of the variety and agreement in their proportions.

We should not linger over any one element for its own sake: it exists only for the whole and is generally sacrificed to it. Therefore, it is obvious that those who halt over any single element will be deceived. Here everything is sacrifice, and much more than is imagined: by the very essence of its forms, this place is already, in this sense, a "consecrated" place. When the work was done, Matisse could say to us: "What I have achieved in this chapel is the creation of a religious space." It would thus appear that those limitless spaces and infinite reaches which Matisse has sought in order to crown the work of his lifetime could have been found only in a monument itself open to spiritual spaces where the life of man knows no limits, neither in extension nor in time—that is to say, in a sacred edifice, a place of worship. But it would be a mistake to see in all this only a supremely intellectual pastime: "They say that all my art comes from the intelligence. That is not true. Everything that I have done I have done through passion." Here too, a great interior feeling has ordered everything, to the smallest detail.

Again, Matisse has said: "All my life, my only strength has been my sincerity." Sincerity, the only force of life and work, reaching the secret heart of millions from one end of the earth to the other—what a lesson! Yet it is very true that the sincerity of a solitary man, if it descend far enough within himself, attains there, for all other men, a universal depth of truth to which nothing else has access.

Whoever looks attentively can verify here what has been Matisse's constant precept: he has done nothing without first impregnating himself completely, body and soul, with what he wished to paint, identifying himself with the object he sought to represent, he then expresses it in a single inspiration, rapid, partly uncontrolled, in order to surrender himself entirely to it without precaution or reticence, in terms of what he himself has become when transformed by the life of the other in him. "What I do must push within me as a plant in the earth", or, "From a certain point onward, it is no longer myself, it is a revelation: I have only to give myself." And he said to us, speaking of the Stations of the Cross: "One should know these things so much by heart that one could draw them with eyes blindfolded." We hardly need to say how much principles such as these ought to motivate all religious art.

It is obvious that this absolute sincerity, in which the present instant contains in itself all the accumulated richness of a long and laborious past, can allow no minutiae, no halting-places. It explains both the hundreds of preparatory drawings, the beginnings without end, the anguish of nights without sleep, and at the same time, the disconcerting simplicity of the finished work. Of all the outlines and studies, of all the enormous labor of four years, nothing is



visible henceforth but these three pure colors in the windows and the brusque black lines, apparently so summary, on the white walls. All the rest, from week to week, all along the way, has been ruthlessly abandoned, sacrificed to a demanding interior truth, and set free at a single stroke. The chattering, distracted and hurried crowds cannot recognize this: this place is not for them. It is for those who, remaining a long while, will let themselves be penetrated and slowly impregnated in their turn by that which it encloses in its silence. In letting themselves be gradually transformed by it, they will find in themselves, and in this transformation of themselves, what Henri Matisse during these four years has faithfully deposited there of his thought and genius.

When he said "I hope that those who enter my chapel feel themselves purified and relieved of their burdens," he was undoubtedly thinking of the character he intended to give the chapel: not a place whose windows and paintings would teach complex things (to people who already knew them), but a place which would change hearts, by its beauty, a place where souls would be purified by the purity of forms.

It is here that the true purpose of the work and of life are defined. While building his chapel Matisse never stopped thinking of those unknown on-lookers, with their burdens—their hardships—like the old woman who said one day on the road to Saint-Jeannet: "It is better that the Holy Virgin has no face; that way everyone can see her as he wishes." When people no longer come here to admire or criticize, but simply to pray, to find here in the silence peace of heart and that bit of joy necessary to each day; when many sadnesses will have been consoled and hopes re-quickened, then the chapel will assume its full meaning and Matisse will have found his reward.

#### *The Way of the Cross*

I WOULD like to say as simply as it seems possible to me what I think of this work: I think it is this which is most important and most beautiful in the chapel. I believe it is also the thing that will disconcert the public of our time most seriously. I say "of our time" because I already see the youngest among us, those of about twenty, accept it and love it without effort. They are on the same level with it; it speaks to them in a language they understand. But I also see spirits as diverse as Picasso and Bazaine pay it the same homage.

With the passing years it is necessary to recognize that the real contact with a work of art is always a secret thing, born from a mysterious relation whose two terms are situated both within and beyond the zones of conscious perceiving. And the explanations that we can try to give of it to those who question us are like signals that we throw out toward unknown lands, which one person answers and another does not, both for reasons which remain equally obscure.

What I see here is like a great page covered with strokes which resemble the altered handwriting, scarcely legible, of those letters a person writes to us in haste under the weight of an overpowering emotion, in which we see, without even being able to decipher them, the clearest and most overwhelming signs of what he is going to say to us. What other writing would be suitable when it is a question of speaking to me of the Passion? These violent notations suffice: they

tell me the essential. Do I need anything else? If I read, I see that one has not had time nor heart to give details, or to choose his words; the terrible news is there, as it is, bare and unmitigated. What else could I expect from one who had witnessed such a drama and had experienced in his heart its cruelty and disorder?

The style here has nothing in common with what we were accustomed to in the work of Matisse. Nowhere else can be found this violence, this total absence of the least hint of beauty: nothing here is arranged for the pleasure of the eyes. Witness even the ciphers which brutally number the stations. (I remember what Father Festugière made me see—that the "sacred" in art disappears as soon as there enters deliberate concern for the beauty of forms.) I detect the kinship of such a style, brusque, primitive and indifferent to everything but what it has to say, with that of Tavant and the first romanesque frescoes.

Matisse told me one day how, still young and unhappy at not being able to paint like everyone else, he had discovered with intoxication before the Goyas of the Musée de Lille that "painting can be a language", indeed, that is "the only thing it can be".

Let us make no mistake: in the great epochs, art is nothing else than a language, not a stage-setting—even when it expresses itself in very difficult terms. For it is not at all proven that it is the duty of artists to make this language accessible to all; it is necessary for them rather to sacrifice everything to purity, to the truth of the signs of what they have to tell us.

*Translated by MARJORIE DI LASCIA*

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— THE REVIEW OF POLITICS

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# THE IMPORTANCE OF KIERKEGAARD

KARL JASPERS

**K**IERKEGAARD died in 1855. As late as 1900 he was still little known outside the Scandinavian countries. True, there had been some selected German translations; in 1896 there had appeared a stout volume entitled *Angriff auf die Christenheit* which contained all the documents of the Kierkegaardian struggle against the Church. A wider circle first became aware of him through other sensational publications. In 1904 Inselverlag published letters and notes on his relationship to his fiancée, in 1905 the *Tagebuch des Verführers*, and in the same year the *Buch des Richters*. This last, translated by Gottsched at Basel, is still an excellent selection from Kierkegaard's diaries which provide us with a remarkable impression of his character. In 1909 began the definitive twelve-volume edition of his works edited by Gottsched and Schrempf, through which one can become thoroughly acquainted with his work. Kierkegaard became a figure of the first rank in the German intellectual world. He was like a discovery.

*Karl Jaspers, who is now teaching in Basle, is one of the outstanding figures in contemporary philosophy. A philosopher of existence, he is the author of THE PERENNIAL SCOPE OF PHILOSOPHY (Philosophical Library), THE WAY TO WISDOM (Yale), and THE EUROPEAN SPIRIT (S.C.M.), as well as works on psychopathology, Strindberg, Van Gogh, Weber, Nietzsche, Descartes and the idea of the university, which have not yet been translated into English. This essay is taken from RECHENSCHAFT UND AUSBLICK, pages 115 to 133.*

Still his name scarcely appeared in the area of academic philosophy before 1914. It was still absent from our histories of philosophy. Shortly before the first World War he became an event for certain young men who were studying theology or philosophy. Today his work has been translated into French and English. His significance is growing throughout the West and even in Japan. Dialectical theology and all shades of existentialism have relied heavily on Kierkegaard. The source of their fundamental principles is obvious.

Among young students today the interest in Kierkegaard is as great as it is in Nietzsche. Lectures and seminars on the one are as likely to be filled as those on the other. Still the questions of what the real Kierkegaard was, what he signified historically, and what his present influence is, cannot be answered unequivocally. In the short space of this article I will attempt a few demonstrations.

**K**IERKEGAARD is a Christian philosopher, but of a remarkable kind. He does not profess himself a Christian and yet he says that the truth of Christianity is everything to him. Furthermore, his works are of very great interest for the unbeliever. He is a writer, a thinker, and a master of language. No reader of *Either/Or*, his first great work and a sensational success in Copenhagen in 1843, is forced to take note that a Christian has written it.

In the pseudonyms under which Kierkegaard published most of his work, he invented "thinkers" whom he permitted to expound his position: the aesthetic man with his sovereign freedom in taking hold of every possibility of life and of spirit; the ethical man with his well-established moral realization in the husband and the citizen; the religious man who out of his own inner cataclysm hearkens to that call of God at which the aesthetic order will be set aside. Through such development in the figures which represent thinking existence Kierkegaard was able as he said "to read once more, where possible in an interior way, the original text of individuals, of the human existence-relationship, known of old and handed down to our fathers."

The event appears to be simple, fair and gratifying: progress through human possibilities leads by ascent over the stages of the aesthetic, the ethical, the humanly religious to the truth, and this truth is Christianity.

But Kierkegaard's position is in no way so direct. He gives no systematic teaching and asks that the opinions of the pseudonyms not be taken for his own. He shows only the possibilities, so as to leave the decisions to the reader. If the reader wishes to have the decisions made for him by Kierkegaard it is rendered very difficult for him. The reader does not find in the work of Kierkegaard the objective, clearly-defined grounds by which he could hold himself convinced. He may find himself in treacherous quicksand in which he has lost his footing.

Indeed Kierkegaard in retrospect has said of his works that they were all written by him in order as it were to deceive men into Christianity. While he took his stand on the ground of this world (on that which interests the men of this world), he wished to lead mankind there where this ground leaves off and the truth of Christianity shines in its splendor, or perhaps there where the capacity for belief is granted by the grace of God.

Kierkegaard refuses to say that he is a Christian and believes as a Christian, but at the same time he states that Christianity is something so high that he dare not aspire to it as long as his own life is not adequate to it.

We ask: of what sort of Christianity was Kierkegaard thinking?

**T**HE belief that God has appeared to the world in the person of Jesus Christ is called Christianity. This belief, moreover, is beyond our understanding. A human being is not God, and God is not a particular human being.

Kierkegaard lived in our own age—an age in which the conception of the God-Man in all its seriousness, literalness, and reality is no longer believed with firm or unquestioned certitude. One seeks to make the conception somehow bearable and comprehensible to his understanding, tries to confirm it by historical research in Scripture, wishes to convince himself through speculative dogmatics.

According to Kierkegaard all of this already involves an abandoning of Christian faith. For the truth of this faith cannot be perceived, cannot be discovered historically, cannot be thought speculatively. It does not like human truth slumber within us as a hidden bud which need only be awakened. It is



not like human truth communicated from teacher to scholar, where the scholar learns only incidentally from the teacher what he might well have been able to discover for himself. On the contrary Christian faith develops outside of and in opposition to human truth. It comes to us from elsewhere. God alone gives us the capacity for belief. One statement of Jesus was enough for His contemporary generation: We have believed that in these years God revealed Himself as a humble servant, lived among us and then died. This statement was enough to make them mindful. In later ages man believes because of this account of the contemporary, as the contemporary believed because of the capacity which he himself received from God. All study, all demonstration, all attempts to make it plausible or practical would be to no purpose.

For the understanding the concept of the God-Man is a paradox. Faith is unreason and therefore is to be attained only through the subjugation of the understanding. Kierkegaard understands that this must be so: if God wants to reveal Himself to man He cannot show Himself directly. For in that case there would be no bond between God and man; man would be as it were crushed and undone. Therefore God must show Himself while at the same time He conceals Himself. He dare not be knowable as God. Therefore He appears in the form of a humble servant in all the humiliation of a crucified criminal.

This God-manifestation is an indirect communication. Even when Christ says that He is the Son of God, it is not a direct assertion because since it stands in contradiction to His humanity it is patently absurd. To understand this assertion, an act of faith is necessary.

Indeed Kierkegaard forbids us to hold as Christian faith what is only human religiosity. Faith in God, the One, the Unchangeable, the Eternal Lover; the totality of human consciousness of guilt; life for an absolute end; the intensification of the soul; all of this is merely human but not yet Christian. No—to believe in the unique, the fearful, all the reality exceeding human understanding, all the appearance of God Himself bursting on human thought—this is possible only in a leap thanks to the bestowal of grace, and not through human skill.

But once one believes, then the believer, gaining eternal salvation, stands in a radically different position toward the world and the world toward him. The world must deny him; in the world he must suffer and be denied in order to take up his cross. The distinguishing mark of a Christian is not only the surrender of the understanding ("to believe against reason is a martyrdom"), but is martyrdom itself, whether in boundless pain or in suffering death for following the faith. This is the indispensable sign of being a Christian. It is the consequence of its radical dissimilarity from the world. Christianity implies an irreparable break with the world.

The further consequence of this belief is the breach through mankind: the breach between those who are Christian believers and those who are not. No one can understand the Christian belief (which is humanly unintelligible) except one who is himself a believer. Therefore this faith operates in a detaching, separating, polemic fashion. Its truth is exclusive. The believer experiences "the grief that he cannot sympathize with all humankind as humankind, but essentially only with Christians."

For the believer things can come to the point that he "must hate father and mother." For his feelings will be akin to hatred if he has attached his salvation to conditions which he knows will not be acceptable to them.

It is in this way that that Christianity which he calls the Christianity of the New Testament appears to Kierkegaard. But what, according to Kierkegaard is the situation of Christianity in our time?

**K**IERKEGAARD says: New Testament Christianity has disappeared. Today we are all Christians; that is, no one is a Christian.

This is the task Kierkegaard sets himself: to show the real Christianity without deception in order to make becoming a Christian difficult. With this in mind he had written his works for a decade. But then in the last year of his life he proceeds to public and direct attack on the Church, on the Christendom of our times, in order to make genuine Christianity possible again.

Today, says Kierkegaard, we are all born baptized, confirmed as Christians, and everything is in order. But faith cannot come by innate nature. Mankind remains, as it is born, in untruth. It has no way to reach truth of itself. Only when God grants the capacity for belief does man become entirely different; then for the first time does he walk in truth; a sudden leap brings him there. One becomes a Christian through a complete reversal, the second birth. His preceding state was not properly one of existing at all. At the decisive moment he becomes conscious that he was born as himself. He reaches this consciousness not through baptism, since the child knows nothing of the baptism; nor through confirmation since at fourteen he is not yet mature. The consciousness comes to him only through the real second birth.

The open assault on the Church in Copenhagen (1884-5) was the most unrestrained attack on the Christian Church and the one grounded on the deepest seriousness which the nineteenth century had seen. Pointing to the true Christianity of the New Testament, Kierkegaard wished to unmask the Christendom of his own time. He reached a climax in these most drastic statements:

By ceasing to take part in the public worship of God as it now is, thereby have you constantly one grave sin the less: thereby you take no part in making a fool of God in what is now given out for New Testament Christianity, but which certainly it is not.

He goes further: the proclaimers of Christianity have a pecuniary interest in people calling themselves Christians and in their not getting to know the truth of Christianity. The state is obliged to reduce all preaching of Christianity to a private matter. "Christ demands that one preach the doctrine for nothing; that one preach in poverty, in lowliness, in complete renunciation, in the most absolute dissimilarity from the world."

**W**HAT motive brought Kierkegaard to this attack? He did not aim at it from the beginning. For years he seemed prepared to become a clergyman. The attack was an ultimate result. In order to find the answer we must draw some hypotheses from his life.

In his early youth the ground was laid. At twenty-two he writes in his diary that he has felt the almost irresistible force of one pleasure after another. He has tasted the fruit of the tree of knowledge and has known a moment of joy in learning, but the knowledge has left behind no deeper mark on himself.

It was necessary for him "to find the truth which is truth for me, and for which I am willing to live and die." He forms the resolution, "Now will I begin to act inwardly." The young man is conscious of having "crossed the Rubicon" because seriousness has been established.

But the realization grows in the course of years to a succession of negative resolutions. The burden of the *No!* lays itself on Kierkegaard's life. He broke his engagement, marriage was denied him—a fact which, despite numerous interpretations, was largely incomprehensible to Kierkegaard himself—but he remained true to the separated one in a unique way. He entered on no vocation. Whenever he, who had passed the examinations long before, wished to become a clergyman, something was against it which denied it to him.

Nevertheless his thought and poetry grew directly out of the negative. Each *no* produced an almost drunken ferment of creativity.

Kierkegaard was aware of this. Unhappy in love, he was able like no one else to praise the happiness of love. He who did not dare to risk marriage has perhaps written more deeply about marriage than anyone else in world literature.

It was the same with faith. He who could not undertake to be a true believer was able to write about belief. As his description of love has a greater charm than the descriptions of a married man, so his writings on religion have a greater appeal than those of a professional clergyman. What he says moreover is not untrue; what he describes is simply his happier, his better self. In his relations to the world of religion, he is an unhappy lover, not a believer. He has only that which precedes faith—despair—and in it a burning desire for religion.

But this showed the Thinker Kierkegaard that his world might indeed not be true. As a Christian any purely poetic existence is sin to him: to write instead of *being*, to occupy his imagination with good and evil instead of *being*, to think the faith instead of living the faith.

It is the mark of Kierkegaard's seriousness that he cannot be satisfied with the mere display of writing and thinking, no matter how extraordinary his spiritual production might be. What he wrote originated in an earnestness which nothing he wrote could satisfy. This is why his writings are so touching. They are never shallow or arbitrary.

One thing always remained clear to him: it is important to turn from reflection to action. It was Kierkegaard's destiny and his mystery, that this step could not take place in his own life.

In the *Journal* we see the vacillation between willing and not willing, the experimentation in thinking, the preparation, the hesitation. In only two directions was firmness attained:

- 1) in negative resolutions, in conscious self-appraisal, in fidelity to that which was denied.
- 2) in the pursuit of literary production, the very variety of his work, the aim of making man the individual mindful.

Only the open attack on the Church, an action full of risk and responsibility, seemed to solve the problem of existence, but this was an action which again as action was only a negation.

How could Kierkegaard endure such living and such thinking?

Kierkegaard's personal piety in the background of his dialectical interpretation of Christianity, of his distinction between human and Christian religiosity, is simple and straightforward, as if there all those refined, tormented thoughts might be forgotten.

So he writes: "The best proof for the immortality of the soul, for the existence of God . . . , is, properly speaking, the mark which a man obtains in childhood: this is absolutely certain, because my father has told it to me."

And again: "From earliest childhood on: that is the main point."

Entirely without reflection—he repeatedly admitted it—he lived in secret with God as a child with its father. He saw, though not altogether unequivocally, the direction in his life.

He always spoke simply of the love of God, the eternal love which is without end: "While I sleep, you wake; and when waking I go astray, you shape it that the error has been better than the right."

On his deathbed he answered the question whether he could pray in peace: "Yes, I can. I pray first of all that all may be forgiven me. Then I pray that I may be free from despair in death. . . . Then I pray that I may know beforehand when the last hour has arrived."

He arranged that his tombstone would carry the verses of the Danish poet Brorson:

But a short time  
And it is won;  
Then will the whole struggle  
Be melted into nothingness.

Then may I refresh myself  
In the stream of life,  
And forever, everlastingly  
Speak with Jesus.

But this piety was not the motive of his thought and his action. In his work it is scarcely visible, except in many passages of edifying discourse.

**W**HAT Kierkegaard really intended by his attack on Christendom depends also on the foundation of seriousness which he laid in his youth, and which, as he swept to such annihilating negation, remained possible for him throughout the retreat from life because of an unaffected childlike piety. But decisive for the attack itself was a quite definite motive.

He wished no revolution; he did not seek at any time to found a new church. He wanted to have nothing to do with either the Socialists or Liberals, or with any of the politicians or agitators, in the planning of programs for the change of social conditions. He avoided all communication with them although



they regarded him as one of themselves. In all these movements he saw only the road to the disastrous destruction of our world.

Did he perhaps wish to fight as a Christian for Christianity? to become a new martyr? He expressly said no: "Although I should by my death become a martyr, it would not be for Christianity." Christianity stands too high for him. He does not dare to confess himself a witness to the truth of Christianity. He does not wish to be mistaken. What then did he wish? Only honesty.

He declares therefore at the height of his open attack:

I want honesty . . . Will our generation honorably, honestly, openly, frankly, directly rebel against Christianity and say to God: We can but we will not subject ourselves to this power.—Very well, then, I am with them.

If they will admit to God how it really stands with us men, that the human race in the course of time has taken the liberty of softening and softening Christianity until at last we have contrived to make it exactly the opposite of what it is in the New Testament—and that now, if the thing is possible, we should be so much pleased if this might be Christianity. If that is what they want, then I am with them.

But one thing I will not do . . . I will not take part in what is known as official Christianity, which by suppression and by artifice gives the impression of being the Christianity of the New Testament.

For this honesty I am ready to take the risk. On the other hand I do not say that it is for Christianity I take the risk . . .

Suppose that I were to become a martyr: I would not even in that case be a martyr for Christianity, but because I wanted honesty.

As an honest man Kierkegaard felt himself needed by Providence. He is—this one time in his life—completely convinced that God wills what he is doing with his attack.

Is honesty now for him the ultimate end? Not at all, but it is the indispensable condition. Therefore he begins his own activity as discreetly as possible: not a witness to truth, not a martyr, not a warrior for Christianity; he shall do nothing else but unmask falsehood.

Why? Kierkegaard sees his age plunging into the nothingness of groundless reflection, of total leveling, of representation in which nothing is represented, of appearance with no sense of value for a foundation, of the universal godless "as if." Let the new seriousness not be looked for in disease, famine and war; first let the eternal punishments of hell be present and mankind will become serious again.

In these hopeless circumstances Kierkegaard sets forth the challenge. The Church should only acknowledge honestly that her action and her weakened teaching is not New Testament Christianity. Let this honesty become a reality, this least minimum, and then man must see. It lies in no man's power to direct the progress of the world. The realization of this honesty he understands as a question to the deity. These changes have taken place. Let it appear whether they have the approbation of providence. If not, all must break asunder, in order that in this dread individuals may again emerge who can endure the Christianity of the New Testament.

This attack on the Church (just as Kierkegaard's interpretation of Christianity) appears to us to be plainly ruinous. Christianity, which must have dura-

tion in time, permanency in the world, is bound to the Church. That with it is bound up accommodation, limitation, perversion, the Christian of the first centuries understood. The Church is never brought to perfection. The Christian element in it is the constant question, the measure, the claim, the task—and it is always corrupted in the secular world. It is enjoined to destroy itself because one wishes to destroy the bearer of its worldly surrender—the Church.

Furthermore, if the Christian faith through so cunning a dialectic shall be delivered into absurdity, so Christianity, rightly understood in this way, would be impossible for rational man as long as he is neither insane nor dishonest.

In short, if Kierkegaard's interpretation of Christianity was the true one, then this Christianity had no future. Kierkegaard's work for its defence was in reality a work for its destruction, in still another direction than the deceptions and accommodations destroy it.

Is not the life and thought of Kierkegaard also proven to be absurd? Is the self-exclusion from the world and the community, from every realization in the world, not like a form of suicide rather than a faith, which is only discernible in negations:

what he believes is for the human reason not only beyond reason but is clearly impossible

the act of believing in principle shows itself only as suffering and martyrdom

every realization—marriage, his vocation,—he meets with negative resolution and turns away.

These signs Kierkegaard himself has expressed: he is no model; he is no authority; he does not show the way; he does not preach.

**S**O ONE must ask in astonishment: what actually was Kierkegaard? what kind of a man, with what mission, with what accomplishment? We see him above all in his personal reality. What an unfortunate man, to whom everything was denied, except that he was a genius in thinking and in writing, and that he knew the deep satisfaction of creating!

At the age of twenty five he writes of himself, "Like a solitary fir, egoistic, secluded and elevated, I stand, cast no shadow, and only the wood dove builds its nest in my branches." And then, "It surely must be frightful on the day of judgment, when all souls again walk into life, there to stand altogether alone, solitary and unknown of all, of all."

And on his deathbed as Boesen reminds him of how many wonderful things had befallen him in life, "Yes, I am very happy about that, and very sad, because I can share the joy with no one."

He speaks of himself as a kind of trial-man, a guinea pig so to speak for existence, and even in his youth he thinks that perhaps in each generation two

or three are sacrificed in order to discover through horrible suffering what will be good for others.

Kierkegaard was conscious of his own fate, of this radical and total deprivation of all humanity and of worldly activity. An entry in his diary, one among countless comparable entries, states:

"Now I completely understand myself to be a solitary man without reference to anyone . . .

with only one comfort: God who is Love,

with longing after only one joy, that I might altogether belong to the Lord Jesus Christ,

with longing after a dead father,

worse than isolated through the death of the only living man whom I have loved in any final sense . . ."

In the course of his negative resolution Kierkegaard has outlined possibilities in his work. There is no radical plan of the manifold forms of the lost aesthetic life. There is no grandiose design for marriage and for human (and according to him not yet Christian) religiousness. His work reveals the basic human situation and lack of proportion with unheard of richness. It would not be possible in this brief space to describe the ideal world which Kierkegaard has unfolded.

However everything remains for him in the form of possibility. It is "thought" by the pseudonym, represented in poetic form. The truth appears to be nowhere. The wealth of form of the aesthetic life is everywhere a lost existence. Moreover, the apparent perfection, the ethically bound, metaphysically grounded marriage, human religion, each has its limits. He dares not be sure of himself.

Therefore we are driven from one to another, we have gained no ground. Christianity demonstrating itself in negative resolutions may be understood as absurd—as untrodden a path as the fruitless ground of Nietzsche, of the eternal return, the dionysiac life and the will to power.

But Kierkegaard does not wish to work for this Christianity, but only for honesty. He constantly repeats that he is not an authority, only a corrective. He calls himself a policeman, a spy in the service of the Almighty.

In point of fact Kierkegaard and Nietzsche will remain ambiguous figures. They are illuminators and at the same time tempters. They are purifying agents for seriousness and admit of being called as witnesses for every fraud. They are masters of honesty and yet they make available methods of thought which allow every truth to slip away. They unsettle in order that each may come to himself, and they destroy in the abyss of nihilism.

Therefore it is not possible to follow them as teachers. But all modern philosophizing would be insufficient if it did not come to know the purgatory of their inward search, even in every corner where one may hide himself or strengthen himself.

I AM convinced that neither theology nor philosophy can base itself on Kierkegaard. That foundation of forty years ago was not the establishment of a new basis; it was the awakening from a sleep.

When we assimilate his work—and it will not be destroyed in the process—we must not forget his own words: "I will leave behind a not inconsiderable intellectual capital; and alas I know who will probably be my heir, that figure which is so offensively dreadful to me, the lecturer, the professor. And when the professor comes to read even this, the real consciousness will still not touch him. Even this will be lectured about."

In reality, when we speak of Kierkegaard, we must almost certainly succumb to this danger to which we are exposed. In order to escape its power it is necessary that we do not confine ourselves to the intellectual capital but that we allow ourselves to capture the seriousness as well.

We today, on the universal voyage in the storm, look into the darkness. Some of us are permitted to remain for yet a while as if on a happy island, deliberating on a glimpse of the sun. By reflecting under such conditions, the importance of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche grows. Their names have risen to stars of the first magnitude, before which the many post-Hegelian philosophers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries fade away.

To discuss the question in the world-historical style which Kierkegaard himself so detested, with Hegel something came to an end, something which remained a unity among all differences for a thousand years, and was a matter of course in his own shattering fundamentals. For more than a hundred years, fixed in matter we have been losing our way, and perhaps constantly accumulate more knowledge. Amid the progress in this new world we see Kierkegaard and Nietzsche as storm birds before a hurricane. They show the unrest, the precipitation, and then the strength and clarity of an instantaneously high flight, and again something like circlings and whirls and rapid falls.

They know themselves as sea beacons; by them orientation is possible, but only while one holds himself at a distance from them. To follow them is forbidden by themselves.

They work in such a way that they bring others to themselves to look for decisions from them, but they do not give the decisions.

For the more an age, losing its historical connections, falls into the slavery of the mass, the stronger becomes the claim made by the individual as individual: to be himself; every man is an individual; here is the last basis on which reality can appear.

At such a time, when living on a stage or within a fiction becomes increasingly dubious, one thing remains worthwhile: honesty.

Kierkegaard's claim, closely corresponding to that of Nietzsche, is to be an individual and to be honest. But this claim is recognized by them first in their entire self-testing. What is the Self? What is honesty? Both have experienced it and thought it out to the utmost.

The claim itself is uncommonly small. It has not yet produced what can perhaps be awakened by it. In the case of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche it stands



square in the midst of the spiritual riches of the European tradition. Their claim alone remains indivisible and inexorable, while in them the riches of the European tradition focus to a great drama of introspection and interior development.

Or with Kierkegaard is it more than this? When we let pass all the absurdity of a Christian belief so violently understood by him, and all the seductive variety of possibility, does he not still offer us the eternal truth of human religion with a wonderful purity? This truth sets forth

the immutability of God, the presence of this awesomeness and this rest, so that for Kierkegaard all is determined and does not change

that before God we are always in the wrong; that all our rebellion miscarries in the eternity of His unfathomable depth

that God is unending Love, so that even at the most frightful time trust can remain in that Providence which we, despite firm obedience to it, do not understand in its enduring ambiguity

These eternal truths, moreover, in the absence of dogmas point only to the possibility of endless fulfillment. They do not endure; their meaning disappears. So much the more wonderful when, in spite of this they always appear again.

The other truths in Kierkegaard's thought are present on biblical grounds:

the world is wrong and it is not to be set right as such, but rather it must go through time in constant change, constantly failing and trying again,—

therefore the unrest of our soul which in this world finds no final resting place. We are the question capable of eternal happiness, and therefore of absolute seriousness, but we remain without an objective answer guaranteed.

**T**ODAY when we philosophize in consciousness of the cosmic moment, when we know that something irrevocable has happened, through which a'l human history experiences a revolution,—

when we see that no man and no people can make satisfaction for this event by any ethical religious reality, through which disaster might be averted and the elevation of man made possible.—

when we think in this ever poor, growing world to discern something as the end of western philosophy in that form which was a single great continuity from Parmenides to Hegel,—

then will we perceive in this era of considerable transition the primitiveness of thinkers such as Kierkegaard and Nietzsche who, in the possession of the medium of thought burst forth as it were, orient us, but yet do not show the way,—

then will we not look to the professional philosophy of the past century for the foundation and value of the world to come, as productive as this professional work has been in historical knowledge. Rather let Kierkegaard and Nietzsche first rouse us to a recognition of the source of that tradition.

It is clear what is now possible. One who has lost all confidence can see the end in Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. But for a confidence which, though unprovable, is at once a confidence in the Godhead and in the potentiality of man, a beginning is perhaps indicated through these thinkers, along with an end. True they do not show the way, nor the content of truth. But they inspire us to seriousness without illusion.

Today in the time of spiritual and material catastrophe through which we are borne on to the coming world, when philosophy has a vanishing significance, it is especially important that we are not satisfied by them.

Philosophy belongs so much to mankind that it must attain a new form. Let us take their seriousness in the tradition as our own seriousness, and then we need not stand helpless in nothingness, nor be delivered from a groundless individuality into an empty existence.

We can attain the standard, and the light of philosophy will yet be left burning. Kierkegaard and Nietzsche have opened our eyes. To one who has experienced it, it is as if he had had cataracts on his eyes and they have been pierced. Now the question is what will be seen with the opened eyes, what will be lived, what will be done.

*Translated by* ERWIN W. GEISSMAN

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# THE LADY AND THE ISSUE

WALTER J. ONG

**A**S PSYCHOLOGISTS now know only too well, issues concerned with authority and submission move in the labyrinths of human consciousness through passages which are often cunning and corridors which are often secretly contrived. The chorus of protest in non-Catholic circles which has followed on the definition of the Assumption provides a case in point—perhaps the finest laboratory case that could be desired from the point of view of theological speculation.

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In the protest, there is a curious tension observable between the preoccupation with authority on the one side and with the matter defined on the other, so that the continued insistence that the latter is "non-essential" becomes a phenomenon of considerable importance. Here we have the strange tendency to associate in the act of protest two apparently irrelevant things so often associated in separatist movements: resentment of authority and a desire to write Our Lady off the record. In the present case, this latter manifests itself in the assertion that the actual content of the definition is, after all, quite a negligible matter—an assertion both so insistent and so calculatingly off-hand as to hint that it conceals issues too urgent psychologically to be brought out into the open. And so, bring them out we must.

The revolt against the Church in the sixteenth century was not the simple revolt against authority that it is often made to be. Psychologically and in every other way, the symbol of authority is the father-image. But the father-image and all the apparatus that goes with it was not only kept by the separatists but inflated by them in a way it could not be within the Catholic economy. The Calvinist's God carried authority to the extreme of sheer whim, and Jonathan Edwards was in the main current of two centuries of separatism when he terrified the citizens of Massachusetts with his sermon on the praiseworthy horrors of divine authority as he conceived it, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." Indeed, the father-image is one of the most viable points of the separatist tradition. Attenuated and vestigial, it remains in the feeling about the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man which is one of the last snippets of dogma to persist in the most advanced stages of "Liberal" Protestantism.

Devotion to a stern, unflinching authoritarianism, become an attribute not of a group but of individuals, split the separatist movement into countless sects. The real, deeply felt, but little understood difficulties of separatists were and are not with such authoritarianism, but with the mitigated, mediated authority, the symbol of which must be feminine, the initial experience of which each human being ordinarily knows in his relations with his mother. The Church which the

separatist berated he saw, significantly, not as a cruel father but as an outcast mother. In anti-Catholic propaganda, even the Pope became only the Scarlet Woman of the Apocalypse—a title hardly the staple in denunciations of dictators.

THE question to which the separatist returned the answer No was not, IS there a stern Master over us all? Rather, it was, In my dealings with this Master is there something involved which asserts itself not by authority so much as by inescapable continuity, which does not dart forth bright words of command but simply dwells with me, something which I do not pretend particularly to understand, which is so immediate that I hardly think of trying to understand it, but which is definitely and ineluctably a datum of my consciousness, which is unmistakably *there*? The matter concerns not a father, who appears at unpredictable intervals, to be sure, but, after all, only occasionally, who is assertive from time to time, but also in a relatively abstract way. The matter concerns a mother, to whom I first awoke, who was there all the time. The father's commands are intelligible, his dealings tend more to be in words, and I know him by them. They are sharp, distinct, and clear. Not so the presence of this other-being. She may indeed give an occasional command, but radically she is known to me as the one who is there alongside me, who binds together all my fragments of days and years in the simple continuity of her material presence.

The mother does not operate in terms of authority, which she is inclined to disavow as her own and refer to the father, for her first experience of this child was as he grew in her womb, and she had little enough authority over him there. She continues her work as she began it then—darkly, mysteriously, and with her own being in complete subjection. She must assert authority, yes, but in a curiously obverse way. When she threatens, it is to say that, if necessary, ultimately a father will punish. She is a permanent occasion of humiliation and shame to those she commands, for her dealings, being based always on derived sanctions, not her own but the father's, keep always at the focus of attention the matter of subordination and subjection. Her very commands are in terms of her subjection to the father, whose sanction must rule all, so that it becomes matter for taunts to have to do what *mother* says.

Both by this subjection and by her way of bringing children into the world, which is not by commanding them nor by explaining them, but by bearing them, she is the symbol of submission and of death. She is, of course, the dark lady of the romantic poets and the mother-goddess of the mystery cults. Her role as representative of the dark, material principle of things determines her action with regard to authority: she flowers and discovers herself when completely and totally subject to it, and she gives it continuity and existence in time and space. Without a mother to transmit his authority into the real world of the child's life, the father is a sorry performer, a practical nonentity, and his authority is matter more for humour than for anything else.

This economy in which the female component is a vital factor is the economy against which the separatist mentality rebels. In its attitude toward this economy, the separatist reveals one of the deep, basic drives of his being which gives separatism—from Brownism and Anabaptism and Evangelicism through



High Anglicanism—its characteristic twist. Depending on how thoroughly separatist it is, separatism from the sixteenth century to the present stands for a Christianity which, in various degrees, is in a fundamental sense unsexed.

**A**LMOST every characteristic tenet of separatist bodies can be charted in terms of the impulse to insulate religion from the femininely polarized aspects of reality. To catch sight of this fact, one must forget the contorting perspectives conjured up by the past few centuries out of the stale smoke of the courtly love tradition, and reconsider the view which makes woman, as against man, a kind of abstraction, the antithesis of all that is earthly, a dweller in a realm of "ideals." This view is ultimately untenable. Woman's relation to ideals is in function of the male's mind. Dante, not Beatrice, wrote the poem. Beatrice may have occasioned the vision, but he *had* it. From the poetic and from the "idealistic" point of view, Dante was inspired, while Beatrice, in a sense, had only to pose for him.

Dante's symbolism and his apotheosis of Beatrice as a kind of incarnate ideal has indeed a certain indubitable validity, but this is not by any means straightforward, and it must not be allowed to obscure the still unimpeachable vision of the old earth-cults and of the Scriptures themselves, which see in woman the very opposite of abstraction, the symbol of body rather than of mind, human nature (all of us, that is, and not woman alone) in its material polarity, the passively oriented, the conserver, the saver of odds and ends, the custodian of material possessions (modern advertisers prefer to say the world's great buyer) — adaptable, like matter itself, so that the stock charge against her is frivolity and fickleness, but adaptable in her own sweet way, so that in function of her very pliancy itself, she becomes the great resister to change in any environment in which she subsists. Many a man has set out to rule a woman and succeeded, but he has neither made her into what he thought he would, nor come out himself unaltered.

The dread of bringing this feminine, passive polarization of reality into the terms which fix one's relationship with God has been an obsession of separatists. The obsession is radically unaffected even by the violence of revivalist preaching and "getting religion," although these phenomena owe their existence and erratic manifestations of self-surrender impulses to the torque which the obsession establishes. One is tempted to say that this dread is more than one of the obsessions: it is *the* obsession which has constituted separatism, seen simply from a particular point of view. The impulse which inspires attacks on Mary, however it may disguise itself here as a defence of God's honour against that of a mere creature, as it sets darkly to work elsewhere reveals its secret springs of action.

Perhaps the most explicit manifestation of the impulse is the fact that with the rise of modern separatism, the concept of the Church as Mother is immediately liquidated. "Holy Mother Church" is heard of only in some few of the least separatist of separatist bodies. She is replaced by such notions as that of the invisible, purely spiritual union of the Elect, whoever they may be, disengaged from any material commitment, or that of the "congregation" based on a contractual union of wills by covenant—a more abstract and masculine sort

of business, and something moreover that could perhaps pull its own weight in a court of law.

Ceremony and images are more openly sabotaged. "The coverlet of her bed was made by her own hands, the clothes of lawn and purple that she wears" (*Prov.* xxi, 22)—but there is to be no lawn or purple in God's service any more, as William Fulke and other anti-surplice agitators insisted, nor any of the abundance of material objects which the author of Proverbs works into his encomium of the virtuous woman. This is trumpery—or symbolism, which, to the mind confronting us here, is the same thing. The sense of mystery, which shows its psychological implications by its regular association with female priestesses and sibyls in pagan cults, must of course go, too, as the ground is cleared for a tidy Unitarianism and the claims of the fully plausible universe.

The separatist's automatic set against the sacraments is of a piece with his set against the feminine polarization in the world of material reality, and his attack on the sacraments instinctively works itself up to its most furious frenzy in hostility to the Real Presence, where the involvement of God with designable material reality reaches a kind of *ne plus ultra*. To this mind, burning candles are particularly loathsome, for, whether or not he can say why, he bridles at the symbolism with its high feminine charge of submission and consuming death. Beneath the flame, he sees shadowed forth the same reality which makes the Catholic to-day feel that votive lights can never be adequately replaced by electric lamps, which do not burn themselves bit by bit away. And the notion of sacrificial action, where a material gift—and, what is worse, most often a gift somehow consumed—is in *rapprochement* with spiritual reality, is particularly abhorrent to him.

AND yet, perhaps in many ways more significant than any of these reactions of his—certainly more real in its psychological effects to-day—is the secularization which the separatist from the very beginning instinctively seeks to impose on matrimony. It is a sociological and psychological and physiological commonplace that marriage is, in a very real way, a more crucial issue for woman than for man. Attitudes toward it affect women more than they do men. Marriage is bisexual, but the relationship of the sexes to it differs. In the Scriptural way of speaking, Eve was made for Adam, not Adam for Eve. Adam was indeed not self-sufficient. He needed a helpmate. But his dependence on her is not of the same order as hers on him. If the sexual situation is posited given the existence of the human male, the female is created to fit the situation. Thus, in a bi-sexual world, woman is destined to be the symbol of sex in a way man himself cannot be. The medieval diatribes against woman are outcries, valid for man and for woman, against the tyranny which sex can exercise. It is no accident that, although the cinema audience is more female than male, sexiness in cinema advertisements—and indeed nearly everywhere—turns on the display of the female body.

An attitude toward marriage, the sacrament of sex, thus tends to be a correlative of an attitude toward woman, and the compulsion that the separatist, from Luther on, has always felt to keep marriage from being too religious, to deny that it is a sacrament at all, is of a piece with his compulsion to insulate

his dealings with God from association with the femininely polarized aspects of reality. Religion must be unsexed, and marriage must go. When she returns to religion, woman must now come alone, unescorted, pretending that she is a man doing the things men do—and one has the female evangelists and ministers who are a persistent, if sporadic, phenomenon in separatist groups. Within the past few years, they have started up immediately in the State-engineered schismatic churches behind the Iron Curtain, and got their pictures in the papers.

Against the total background of what it is to be a human being, one's sex is in a way a minor incident, and an incident subject even to chemical control. But psycho-physically, and metaphysically, it is an incident which, if it repays study, remains always inexhaustible in its implications. Like the law, sex is a bottomless pit with ramifications everywhere. Thus, in their tendency to deny specifically religious relevance to marriage, the separatists have of course denied the religious relevance of virginity. The wife's giving herself to her husband being no sacrament, neither is there any virtue in man's or woman's refraining from all that has to do with this kind of surrender—saving up everything connected with the self-surrender impulse—to give oneself in a genuinely analogous, but more sublime way to God. The analogy has no force. The *Canticle of Canticles* is robbed of meaning, and so is the espousal of the soul to God which dominates the whole corpus of non-scriptural mystical literature. Professor Kenneth Murdock's recent study of the New England Puritan's devotional poetry has made the point that only one writer, Edward Taylor, the least separatist and nearest to Catholic—and, incidentally, by common acclaim far and away the most competent poet—features the traditional espousal motif in his works at all.

The term "Puritan," which establishes itself as the proper name for an arch-separatism, is mortally accurate, if unwittingly so, in its sexual overtones. The "purity" which the Roundhead proposed for religious service meant removing from this service all that bespeaks feminine polarity. Woman and sex being surrogates for one another, the religious economy of the Puritan thus entailed a curious kind of sexual restraint—rightly styled an inhibition for being not the restraint of a frank chastity but the tortured mobilization of heavily disguised drives.

**B**UT beyond and beneath all the other manifestations, the most unequivocal sign of the ill-balanced sexual doctrine of separatist movements remains its attitude toward Mary. This attitude is suspect because it is all out of proportion to its announced objective, that of preventing the apotheosis of a creature, which is hardly even aimed at when it comes to the case of a Christ degraded to the rank of mere man. There is no scandal taken when those who no longer think Christ is God go right ahead naming whole churches after Him—the Church of Christ Scientist, and so on. But a recent polemic finds something horribly sinister in the Catholic practice of dedicating individual church buildings here and there to Our Lady. Mary has obviously become a symbol, as it is indeed, natural she should, and her symbolic valence is a matter not of her person nor of her mere creatureliness, but of her sex. As is the case in relations with woman, the reaction of her enemies to her is something they feel much more intensely than they understand.



The separatist mentality has not grown up in the world unattended by other related attitudes toward sex. Blood-brother to this mentality is the repression of the knowledge that there is tragedy involved in every woman's existence by the simple fact that she is a woman. This repression, a kind of unforeseen sequel to the warped medieval cult of courtly love, has tyrannized for several centuries more and more over men's minds, particularly in "liberal" circles, where insistence on the motif of complete independence as a rule of life is constantly embarrassed by the scandal of subjection within the sexual framework of the race itself. The glossing over of woman's tragedy accounts for much of the unsettling effect on the contemporary mentality produced by Freudian insights, which once more at least frankly face the implications of the relationship between the sexes. The same glossing over is tied up with the obsessional hostility toward Mary and the inability, often enough experienced even by devout Catholics, to catch the implications of her role in the economy of the Redemption.

Perhaps this repression has seen its hey-day. D. H. Lawrence seems to have felt it his mission in life to attack the lies abroad regarding the relations of the sexes, and, from a quite different quarter, a novelist such as Mr. C. S. Lewis has used the theorem of the subjection of the female as a kind of leit-motif. It is certain that the temper of the "liberal" mentality would profit by a renewed acknowledgment of the tragedy of woman's lot, and quite as certain that the temper of Catholic devotion to Our Lady would only gain by the same acknowledgment.

Woman's tragedy is due ultimately to the fact that her body is ordered to others in a way that man's is not. For each of us, our mother's body was at one time at our command, and the whole routine of her living was ordered not to herself, but to us. Woman, corporeally speaking, which is to say as woman, for spiritually she is the equal of man, is not so self-possessed as she might be (if she were man). She is built to be an offering to others, to feed them, to be consumed in their use. Her most spiritual aspirations are dominated by this orientation within her. She cannot ordinarily build a kingdom around herself as a man can—she must build it around others. She can be happy only when involved in a certain amount of self-destruction. This is not a god-like quality. It is a humbling and all but indecent protestation of finiteness. Yet a woman is compelled to it by all the physiological, psychological, and sociological drives in her life. As a result, this is a man's world.

The role of woman as mother involves all this, and it involves all this for the radical reason that to be a mother means ultimately that woman must furnish out of herself material for another's body. Woman is deeply committed to the lowliness of matter. The sentimentality and "mommism" which is endemic, we are assured, in America to-day (but sure by that very fact to be epidemic in the world to-morrow) and which is only another aspect of the silent conspiracy to suppress the tragedy of woman's lot, has so warped the meaning of mother that the simple statement that this is what it means to be a mother comes almost as a scandal. Yet Catholics who forget that motherhood is radically a traffic in matter can realize only dimly the pitch and meaning of Our Lady's elevation in grace, the full implications of the *Magnificat—et exaltavit humiles*. To speak



plainly, Mary is endowed with the graces which make her the chiefest of mere creatures because her body was made use of by the infant Christ's.

This is only to say that she was given the graces she was given because she is the Mother of Christ, the Mother of God. An angel can generate his thoughts, father them, produce them as a father. He cannot mother them. Thoughts are not that sort of thing. There is paternity in the Godhead—more perfect than human paternity, which functions, however slightly, in terms of matter, and thus has in it an admixture of maternity—but in the Godhead there is no corresponding maternity. Nothing higher than a human being can be a mother. Nothing higher than a woman can be. Motherhood, woman's greatest glory, is something that does not exist elsewhere except lower on the animal scale. Yet it is because of this that she was made full of grace. Because of the tragedy of woman's lot.<sup>1</sup>

**I**T IS because precisely so lowly a creature is proposed as the greatest person in all creation, exalted above all the angels, exalted, be it known, above every created male person (God is jealous of masculinity and reserves its exaltation to the case of His Own Son, where it lodges safe from pride, assumed to the Divinity)—it is because of this that Mary remains for eternity the stumbling-block to over-weening male pride, whether this be that of the man who refuses to have woman preferred to him or of the woman who refuses to have anyone preferred to her but a man. Mary says nothing, but merely for being what she is, she sets up a state of crisis. In this state of crisis, one tiny prayer to Mary signalizes a whole psychological revolution and the opening of the soul to grace. It is a warrant of, not perfect, but essential humility. For God will have neither man nor woman on any other terms than complete submission. Authority is not evil, but good. Yet no one is rewarded for exercising it. Only for submitting to God's directives in its exercise.

In that she is woman and exalted for her womanly function as mother, the exaltation of Mary is a kind of apotheosis of tragedy and of the will to die. It is, in a very real sense, the exaltation of the material, passive principle in human existence—Newman, whose flashes of discernment here are most rewarding, has observed that heresies which attack Mary are likely to end by asserting that matter is evil, or what is the same thing, by explaining it away. And it is in function of her engagement with matter that the Assumption of Our Lady reveals itself for the critical thing it really is.

The Resurrection of Christ, St. Paul insists, is the keystone of Christian belief. Yet, in a way, the Assumption of Mary focuses the issue raised by the Resurrection more sharply than even the Resurrection itself. It is a quite impossible feat of historical exegesis, but one often attempted, to explain away the Resurrection of Christ as simply a way of speaking indulged in by his pious followers. The spirituality of Christ's message, His obvious desire to sublimate the material as far as possible in the spiritual, while it does not lend any substance to this exegesis, can be used to make the exegesis somewhat plausible. The Church's insistence on the historical verity of the Resurrection of Christ can thus fail to impinge very really on the consciousness of those outside the

Church because they can lose it and forget it in the great wealth of purely spiritual items in His teaching. But Mary's womanly function as the symbol of the material world will not allow her Assumption to be thus dismissed in a genial misinterpretation. Mary's whole *raison d'être* is the Body of Christ—she did not give Him His soul or His graces or His spiritual message. What is more, her role is underwritten here not by abstract dogma but by the archetypal symbolism in which psychiatrists deal and which involves the human consciousness in the toils of real existence so deeply that by no flights of abstraction can the toils be spun away.

Mary does not submit to abstraction. She cannot be quite liquidated in the mazy flow of thought. She cannot be distilled into a purely spiritual message. Mary indeed stood for much spiritually. But, rather differently from her Son, who was the Word of God and spoke accordingly, she functions hardly at all in terms of what she says. In a strange way, her spirituality is keyed to her material role, her divine motherhood. To focus a theological issue on Mary is inevitably to engage oneself inextricably with matter and its sanctification. To say that her body is no longer on earth is to fix the issue once for all. Like all human beings, her Son had a body, it is true. But His role here is not hers and cannot be. Mary, in a peculiar way, not only has a body, but is body—being woman, the symbol of body, important as the mother, whose claim to glory lodges in her having been prepared to give a body to her Son.

**T**HUS the doctrine of the Assumption, far from being anything 'new' or "non-essential," has the very desirable effect of precipitating Catholic doctrine quite really in the face of the persistent tendency to distill it away into vaporous nothingness. Now it is less possible than ever to pretend that the Catholic position means less than it means in fact, or to pretend that a sufficiently elaborate theory or a proper economy of explanation would make the Catholic position much less a commitment than it is. The commitment here, like any commitment, is made not in terms of theory but in reality. In the case of the doctrine of the Assumption, the commitment and the crisis is fixed within reality in terms of the concrete material of Mary's body. The Assumption does not engender theory so much as create a situation, like that created by the question, This God you speak of, do you mean that, like human persons, like you or me, He is really *there*? (the implication being, of course, not by spatial but by personal presence).

The proclamation of the Assumption has been cited outside the Church as an obstacle to the unity of Christendom. The nervousness here perhaps betrays the dream of a unity without commitments. There is another kind of unity which dominates Catholic thinking: the unity of the Mystical Body, a unity grounded in the material here and now, where, after all, the material and the spiritual meet—Jesus Christ yesterday and to-day and the same forever, grasped in the designable actuality of those making up His Church. Generally speaking, attention to the Mystical Body and attention to Mary are functions of one another, although here again Mary underlines the bodily component more urgently than her Son does.

Perhaps one can go farther still. The Mystical Body has been lately a favourite topic not only of Catholic theologians but of many outside the Catholic Church, who even hope to implement out of this topic their theories of a loosely connected Christendom. Would it be accurate to suggest that the nervousness concerning devotion to Mary which haunts even such minds seriously interested in the Mystical Body betrays a torque in the application of the Mystical Body doctrine itself? The nervousness is there. It is a strange psychological fact that, when he has agreed with the Church on all points of doctrine, even on all points regarding Mary, there persists for the non-Catholic a curious uneasiness regarding his personal relationship and that of others to Mary, a psychological block which may even keep him from praying to her as his Mother and which at least warns him to tread somewhat warily here. The state of affairs is quite different from what obtains within the Catholic Church where complete lack of inhibition regarding adulation of Mary is one of the characteristic attitudes which Catholics who have hardly a glimmering of abstract theology bear about in the deepest depths of their being.

Unsteadiness regarding Mary is a psychological symptom of an imbalance regarding the Mystical Body which is radically a tendency to slur over the material component, the Body, and to concentrate too much on the "mystical." Neither component should be sacrificed. Christ's Church is both mystical and Body, with that which Body bespeaks, possible wounds and sufferings, but always a continuity which is not only spiritual but somehow materially assignable as well. *You shall not break a bone of him.*

**B**Y VIRTUE of the archetypal symbolism in which her whole being involves her and which brings St. Thomas to maintain that it was thoroughly in keeping with the nature of reality that Christ should have a human mother but no human father, Mary is inextricably involved in the notion of the Mystical Body and thereby in the structure of the Church itself. Attitudes toward her become attitudes toward the Church and toward all reality. The point can be made in two theorems which can perhaps now be advanced. First, anti-Marianism tends to generate separatism and separatism anti-Marianism. Indeed, in many cases the two are no more than surrogates for one another. Secondly, the Mystical Body of Christ is to be found only where there is no nervousness, no uncertainty regarding matter and material continuity, not as an abstract bit of theory, but as both detached from and set within the complex of all other issues by means of the symbol which is woman. This last theorem can be elaborated in another and perhaps more telling formula: The Mystical Body of Christ is to be found only where such a concept as that of Holy Mother Church exists as a natural frame of thought and as a real determinant of mentality. Groups and individuals which cannot use with confidence and genuine relevance this concept of Holy Mother Church, whatever they may call themselves, are in fact separatist movements. Dogma develops, but it never repudiates itself. Assured possession of this age-old concept of Holy Mother Church is a *sine qua non* of contemporary orthodoxy. Those who cannot manage the concept with assurance are somehow off balance regarding that continuity and unity and that sanctification of the



material component of things which the doctrine of the Assumption makes patent as nothing else quite would to-day.

<sup>1</sup> Since the completion of this article, the American magazine *Time* (December 31, 1951) has carried an interesting report about the proposal of the Rev. Cyril C. Richardson of the Union Theological Seminary in New York to introduce "priestesses" in the Episcopal Church so that thereby "the motherhood of the Church can be given unique expression." This proposal is interesting as showing an awareness of the strained mental state of Protestant Christianity regarding motherhood rendered ineffectual by the wish to cancel out the implications of womanhood and motherhood as involved with tragedy and death. Professor Richardson acknowledges that "the main problem is determining just what the special functions of the priestess should be," but that he wants them to have to do, as priestesses, with the sacraments and pastoral care. But in these fields, woman will not be found less a symbol of tragedy and death. Rather, with the high potentiality of action (the knife of the Old Testament sacrifices) and passion (the victim) which ritual generates, woman's symbolic role will be only intensified in such a way as to embarrass even further what we have called the unsexed Protestant state of mind. It is no accident that the priestesses in pagan religions tended to be not sacrificing priests but prophetesses, and to do a very special kind of prophesying, less self-possessed, less articulate than that of male prophets. The prophetess suffered, endured the visitation of the god so as to become completely beside herself, entranced, as in the *Aeneid* vi, 77-80, where Apollo, forcing the sibyl at Delphi into submission, "reins at her frothing mouth, tames her savage heart, and molds her forcibly to his will." The "priestesses" were connected with sacramentalism, indeed, but by becoming themselves a kind of pagan sacrament, a visible sign manipulated by the god, even a kind of living sacrifice, an offering which the powerful god took to himself.

<sup>2</sup> Despite their strong tradition of devotion to Our Lady, evidence is not wanting that the schismatic condition of the Orthodox churches tends chronically to generate anti-Marianism in them. Witness this statement by H. Alvisatos in his article, "The New Dogma from an Eastern Orthodox Standpoint," *Ecumenical Review*: III (January, 1951), p. 153: "The Immaculate Conception . . . and . . . Assumption, . . . both distinctive marks of a Divine nature, would, if doctrinally formulated, create much confusion, even if indirectly, with the absolute of the true monotheistic conception of the Holy Trinity as held in our Church." It is hard indeed to see how uneasiness about "doctrinally formulating" these two mysteries can be due to a distinctively divine character supposedly attaching to them, since the possession of a material body is a necessary condition for both of them—a fact which makes it easy to suspect the real roots of the uneasiness here as connected with Our Lady's femininity and the whole economy of the Mystical Body again.



# THE APOSTOLATE OF THE LAITY

JOHN M. TODD

**F**OR many years Catholic writers have been insisting upon the importance of the layman. The doctrinal background to the lay apostolate has been elaborated on many occasions from many points of view. To take a recent example THE DOWNSIDE REVIEW published last spring an article entitled *The Priesthood of the Faithful* by

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Mgr. H. F. Davis, D.D. What has been the result of these impressive statements? Only too often a mountain of documentation has produced the ridiculous mouse of another official Catholic society, fully constituted with ecclesiastical approbation, achieving very little, and sometimes adding further to the divisions already existing in the parish. In many quarters the indispensable nature of a truly lay apostolate has not been realized; the doctrinal explanation of the vocation to such an apostolate has not been grasped. Since the actual need has often not been noticed, an inductive approach to the problem will be best. Two examples may help to indicate the precise character and the special features of the apostolate which is required of the layman.

The first example comes from the town. It is commonplace to say that there is in the world to-day a new unity as a result of modern facilities of communication. In particular, industrial workers of all kinds are becoming steadily more and more conscious of their membership of a class of people which extends throughout the world. This consciousness is generating a will towards unity. The natural solidarity of all human beings and their desire for communion with each other is crystallizing into a *mystique* of fraternity between all industrial workers. Communism has done much to encourage this *mystique*, directing it in ways convenient to its own policies. This consciousness of unity is based on elements in human nature which are naturally good; and potentially it is part of the fulfilment of God's plan of love for the world, his plan of unity for the whole human race in Christ. How can this truth be brought to the workers? There is only one way. The fact of this potentially world-wide Christian unity as a plan of love has to be visible to them every day in the lives of those working companions who are Christians. This unity must be seen to be the true fulfilment of the fraternal *mystique* which they already know; the fact of its being potentially universal, of its being a plan of love for all mankind, not merely for one class at the expense of others. The achievement of this can only come from a Christian identification of the layman with his environment, his use of it for his own spiritual life. The layman needs the priest, as every Christian does, and needs help to see how to use his environment. But no priest can do the work itself; no amount of preaching, not even the desperate and sometimes necessary remedy of the priest-workman can be a permanently satisfactory answer. Any answer brought in from outside is inadequate; the only adequate answer is a completely incarnate one developed through to suffering and death,

given by the worker himself in his own environment. (The detailed application involves working out a Christian approach to conditions of work, responsibility, works councils, etc. A good deal of this has been done in England by onlookers, and usefully, but very little by the workers themselves. These details, however, do not concern us here.) In fact it is a conception which is profoundly Christian, and whose inspiration is the Gospel. In spite of, perhaps because of, its simplicity, the conception has been often almost obliterated by a proliferation of official Catholic activities. However, the *Young Christian Workers* are grappling with the need; they are in fact a pioneer example of an authentic lay apostolate. Much of this paragraph owes its inspiration to the words of the founder of the Y.C.W. at the World Congress of the Lay Apostolate held in Rome in October 1951.

The second example comes from the country. For a long time now in England groups of people have been rediscovering that man has affinities with all created things, and that he needs to express his and their common relationship to God in some form of sacrificial and sacramental action. This rediscovery has usually resulted on the social level in some form of back-to-the-land and back-to-the-crafts movement, accompanied, often, by some sort of eclectic religion, roughly equivalent to the gnosticism of the late Roman Empire. Just as the workers' consciousness of unity is a valid experience, so also this consciousness of an organic affinity with other living things and a desire to make common gestures with them is a valid experience. Just as the former is exploited by the communists but finds its true fulfilment in the Christian worker, and in the Christian cell in the factory, so the latter, although at present dissipated in false mysticisms, could find its true fulfilment in the Christian village, in Christian marriage, in the Christian family in the country. Again the answer has to be lived. The Christian must identify himself with this valid experience of a need to return to the natural roots of society, and show its true fulfilment; in this case the liturgical traditions must be drawn on as fully as possible. Again the answer is easy to write up; in this case it has hardly begun to be lived, in England. In France the *Young Christian Farmers (J.A.C.)* are grappling with the situation.

**I**NSTAUARE *omnia in Christo* does not consist in reciting the rosary, nor even in offering Mass, in a factory, but in using all creatures, all materials and all living things, with a reverence for their own particular natures, and for the good of the human race, making them as completely available as possible to the human race whose destiny is to be the *Totus Christus*.

A lay apostolate, then, has to be developed on every level, physical, social, and spiritual. It needs chaplains who are its servants in the real sense in which the Pope is *servus servorum Dei*. It requires that the work itself should allow the laity to do the work and that some priests should encourage the work. For this it seems that there are at least two great needs. First, priests intending to work in parishes should receive a more specific training for giving a proper spiritual formation to lay people, and for encouraging them to use their own *milieux* to develop their spiritual lives. Secondly, the life of the Church, the liturgy, must be available to lay people in such a way that their spiritual lives are rooted

in their parishes (or their 'cells' or supra-parochial organizations, either of which may have to take the place of a parish for lay apostles at times) and receive their seminal graces at the Sunday Mass. The existing lack of spiritual formation and of proper participation in the Church's life are the two principal facets of a basic ignorance of Catholic doctrine which is certainly widespread amongst lay people throughout the Church. This ignorance was officially recognized by Pope Pius X, who established the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, now largely defunct in England, in an attempt to rectify the situation. But there can be little doubt to-day that this ignorance and its rectification is bound up with the need for an apostolic and missionary outlook springing from a vital communal participation in the Church's liturgy and a deep spiritual acceptance of all the experiences of daily life. Let us look at the situation in more detail.

Little good is done by mere grumbling. But the situation must be realized as it is if proper action is to be taken to rectify it. In many parishes in England any kind of apostolic work has been looked on with suspicion, and occasionally has been virtually persecuted. There is reason for this. The lay people who have seen the need for apostolic activity have often had more zeal than wisdom, because they have not received any adequate training, or deepening of their spiritual lives. The more intelligent and prudent have suffered along with the others. And as a result the Catholic parish has not possessed that apostolic spirit which is surely essential in a 'secularized' country such as is England to-day. The apostolic outlook, one may say, is an essential attribute of a parish which is to fulfil its own vocation as a Christian community. Its absence is in practice linked up with heavy lapsation amongst the young and an over-emphasis on a material façade. We touch here on two other problems, that of the parish community itself, and that of the schools, both spheres in which the laity form the material of the subject under consideration, and both spheres in which considerable changes will be needed if the lay apostolate is to become a reality. We return to the subject of the parish later.

But the basic problem is the laity's lack of a proper spiritual formation, a lack of knowledge that there is such a thing as an apostolic call to every Christian, and a lack of anything which will enable the graces they receive through Baptism, Confirmation, Matrimony and the Holy Eucharist, to be continually deepened, and to be realized as fully as might be. Only the individual with special gifts, an occasional person, has the opportunity to achieve this deepening. The great majority of lay people have little or no acquaintance with the 'life of the Church', its liturgical life, which was once the means of educating the faithful in the divine truths and at the same time inspiring them with a faith of a dynamic and apostolic character, and enlarging their personal spiritual experience. As a result of this, the laity lack an integrated Christian approach to their problems, especially those external problems which are specifically theirs. If they take an interest in Catholic social doctrine, it is apt to be dry, lacking the fire of an apostolic activity, somewhat abstract.

The final result is that the laity are only too often treated like children by priests (a contributory reason, one suggests with some trepidation, may be that the priests were themselves treated like schoolchildren in the seminaries),



and not like rational creatures. One might think this an elementary point, yet the Holy Father apparently thought it worth making in his address to the delegates at the recent Congress already referred to. He said that when Bishops speak of the layman of Catholic Action as an instrument in their hands, the comparison must be understood thus: 'that the ecclesiastical Superiors use him in the manner in which the Lord and Creator uses rational creatures as instruments, as second causes, "disposing of them with great favour" (Sap. 12, 18). Let them use these instruments then with a consciousness of their grave responsibility, let them encourage them, suggesting enterprises to them and welcoming with goodwill the enterprises which they suggest, approving them in broad-mindedness according to their opportuneness. In decisive battles, it is often at the front that the most useful initiatives arise. The history of the Church offers us sufficiently numerous examples of this.' That such a thing still has to be said is some indication of the road which has yet to be travelled. And one further piece of frankness must yet appear.

**S**EVENTY-FOUR nations sent delegations to the World Congress of the Lay Apostolate—*Conventus ex omnibus gentibus laicorum apostolatui provehendo*, as it was officially termed. Undoubtedly the resulting body of twelve hundred people was reasonably representative of Catholic lay people throughout the world. It was in fact treated as such at the official Congress functions in Rome. On the second day of the Congress messages reached various delegates, including a member from the English Delegation, asking them to come to a meeting which was to be the inaugural meeting of the Commission of Conclusions, of which they were to be the members. The commission was a working party whose task was to draw up a document to be submitted to the President of the Congress as suitable for publication as the conclusions of the Congress, also to draft a second brief document for the Holy Father. The chairman of this commission was a layman, the secretary and assistant secretary were priests. At the first meeting, a draft of proposed conclusions drawn up by Mgr. Pietro Pavan, a member of the commission, was put before the commission. During the subsequent four days, groups of members of the commission were asked to fill out the various sections of this document; nearly all this work was given to ecclesiastical members of the commission. It was made clear that this was to be the document which was to go out to the world as embodying the conclusions of the deliberations at the Congress, that substantial additions by way of practical suggestions arising out of the work of the Congress would not be accepted, and even that small additional phrases attempting to make matters more precise would be censored and possibly removed or weakened in their phraseology. These facts became clear as suggestions were made, and as sentences which the commission had accepted were found to be missing from the document when it returned from the typists. The second document for the Holy Father, was intended to be less general, and it was stated that it would be confidential and would not be printed. This was duly drawn up, but the same process as before took place. Sentences which the commission had accepted had disappeared when the document returned from the typists' office, and members of the commission who enquired about this were given to understand that the subjects referred to



were banned. (The subjects are amongst those referred to in this article.) The commission was thus prevented from saying what it wished to the Holy Father.

It will be clear that the real need for the lay apostolate and the actual meaning of the many definitions which it has received is not yet grasped by many people. If this article is taken merely as an anti-clerical grumble it will have failed in its purpose. The contentions are that the layman needs the priest, that each needs the co-operation of the other, and that neither is able to fulfil his apostolic vocation without the complementary work of the other. A point which may have to be emphasized and developed in the future, in this work of co-operation, is that the laity have to provide the material, the facts, on which the priests' moral teaching is based. It may be that more frequent lectures in seminaries by lay people on their actual situation, on their work problem, and on their home problems, will be one answer. The mention of the home raises the subject of marriage. In the development of a more widely understood theology of this sacrament priests need to know more precisely the material with which they are dealing. There is a tremendous apostolate for the Christian layman here; but he cannot help his non-Christian neighbours simply by quoting *Casti Connubii*. And the priest cannot give the Christian husband and wife a truly incarnate understanding of the sacrament unless he knows more of their own problems and difficulties than he often does. But once the truths have come across to the Christian husband and wife, they will see how to use their daily occasions, the actual experiences of their married life together, to develop their own spiritual understanding and their love. Then they can become apostles. As with our two examples at the beginning of this article, the process must be a vital one; an apostle cannot convince except with words that have the power of personal experience; and the key to this experience is the Church's teaching.

THE principal training of laymen must take place on the spot. But it is to be borne in mind also that the adult education movements give scope for prayer and study courses at a centre where a vigorous community life helps to give him the idea of a Christian community. The idea of the 'retreat' needs to be developed and adapted to the needs of the ordinary layman who would find the atmosphere of a religious retreat house too unusual. As Mr. R. F. Trevett has pointed out in *Towards a Catholic People's College* (Sheed and Ward), the widespread ignorance and shallowness of the lives of the Catholic laity need some such corrective as was afforded to the clergy by the founding of the seminaries when they were in a similar condition. Some such colleges as he outlines may be part of the answer to that *desideratum* of Pius X's, still so strikingly unfulfilled: 'what is most necessary at the present time is to have in every parish a group of laymen who are at the same time virtuous, well instructed, determined, and really apostolic'. On the continent Catholics have been grappling with the problem for years; an indication of their achievement is the appearance of a new periodical solely devoted to the subject of doctrinal formation for lay people, *Lumière et Vie* (Saint Alban Laysse, Savoie). In England such periodicals as *The Life of the Spirit* (Blackfriars Publications) and *New Life* (a Y.C.W. production) concern themselves to some extent with the same

subject. And retreats and week and week-end courses and summer schools of various kinds are on the increase.

But training through such courses or in a college, as a rule, can only be a matter of occasional weeks or week-ends, or, perhaps once in a lifetime, of a month or two. Ultimately the layman must receive some adequate help, such vitally applied understanding of the Church's doctrines as he is able to receive, in the place where he lives. The parish and the priest are of final importance.

It is necessary, then, to say something more about the parish. As has been indicated already, in most parishes the layman lacks any real status. The question of exactly how this matter is to be rectified has yet to receive the study it requires. But it seems clear that a much more open mind will be needed in approaching the very varied problems of the Catholic parish in England to-day. It might be that in big industrial parishes the curates would have to live in different parts of the parish and to offer Mass there; there can be little doubt that the presbytery is a great barrier of a 'class' kind in these parishes. It may be that if this were done the priests concerned should become more directly dependent on the parishioners round them for their food and clothing. This raises the question of finance. It seems reasonable that the laity should know the details of parish expenditure, and also that they should expect to be consulted on finance in general. Without relieving the priest of the ultimate responsibility, a great deal of help could be given him by a lay advisory council, and certainly many present methods of raising money made more efficient (and the tradition of several collections and door money abolished). In particular it would be reasonable that the laity should have some say when money is collected and spent on Church furnishings of one kind or another. These are all seemingly small points. But they illustrate what is involved in considering the layman's status in the Catholic Parish. By and large, if he is to be given his rightful status and given the sort of training he needs as an apostle, he will also need to be given a reasonable responsibility in the parish itself. The two things must obviously go together. Many useful suggestions bearing on this subject have been made in a book called *Vraie et Fausse Reforme dans l'Eglise* by Yves M.-J. Congar, O.P. (Editions du Cerf). On page 185 he writes: 'There is need for the elements of a more communal and missionary kind within the Church, for a better adaptation of our parishes, schools and other works, eventually a better organization of the ministry, and finally the building up of a more real relationship between the top and the bottom, with a better understanding of the role of the laity in the ecclesiastical organism'.

Another French book provides a model of what must be done for England. The Abbé Michonneau's *Revolution in a City Parish* (Blackfriars) ranges over all the activities of a suburban working class parish describing some of the measures which have been taken to revivify it. The measures cannot be transferred in a lump to this country. A proper examination of the problem as it is in England has first to be made. In town and country alike the Catholic parish in England is failing radically in its work; it is not a living Christian community, and the signs of this are that it loses a very heavy number of those who are born into it. Extreme measures may be required in some cases. One or two possibilities may be mentioned. Occasionally a very specialized sort

of parish may be needed to deal with a particular area, such as that surrounding docks, or in an isolated rural district. Small cells, or super-parochial organizations may themselves sometimes have to do duty in a semi-permanent or experimental way for parishes (workers, or lay apostles working in their vocational organizations, in some cases, can hardly ever be present at the parish Sunday Mass, or at any parish gathering.) A suggestion which seems to be reasonable is that there should be once again permanent deacons and sub-deacons in the parishes, these to be ordained from lay people in the parish who had proved themselves as practising Christians over a number of years; they could be given some brief training, and, in the case of deacons, permitted to preach. It is the case that many parish priests now have to do work which would have been done in past times by clerics in minor orders. Another matter, raised at the Congress, important in other countries, was the fact that rich dioceses exist side by side with extremely poor ones, without any assistance being available from one to the other. All this may seem far removed from the lay apostolate, and it may also seem impertinent for a layman to speak of such subjects. But the subjects do in fact concern lay people, for it is they who are ultimately affected.

IT IS clear that all the problems we have mentioned relate in one way or another to liturgical problems, and that all remedies must be rooted in a determination to make the liturgy, and primarily the Sunday Mass, the fount of Christian life. The liturgical and the spiritual problem receive a solution together when Mass is celebrated for a Christian 'cell', in the industrial *milieu*, by a priest acting as chaplain (it must be noted that this is the activity of an apostolic group bound together by a life of shared experience; it is very different from the celebration of Mass in a factory by a priest coming specially for the occasion, useful as this may be). A formula for the lay apostolate which cannot be bettered was given by Cardinal Suhard: 'The Christian does not choose his method; it is imposed on him by the environment of which he is part, and it is the action of the heaven'. In his great pastoral *Rise or Decline of the Church* (Y.C.W. Publication), Cardinal Suhard provided the basic principles for the making of that "'Christian Summa" of the world now taking shape' which he declared to be 'the greatest service that can be rendered to the Church and her sons' by the 'intellectuals'. This pastoral will repay much study by those wishing to create a truly lay apostolate in England.

On page 26 of his book, already mentioned, P. Congar, O.P., says that it is no accident of history that the liturgical revival was the first of all the modern reforms; he goes on: 'Although the liturgical movement in France has become to any extent organic only recently, we may fairly say that it declared itself at the outset with the C.P.L.<sup>1</sup> (1943) as something more than a movement for worship which should be more intelligent and more of a community affair; it was from the first in vital connexion with the movement for a return to sources, to the Bible and to the Fathers, along with the rejuvenating of the sermon, the Catechism, and of pastoral activities generally, which are the most profound *desiderata* of the present apostolic endeavour'.

On page 50, speaking of the need for sincerity, he writes: 'People want an altar which is really an altar and not a shelf for displaying flowers and statues, a vigil of Easter or Pentecost which is a vigil and not a morning office to be hurried through'. And this reference allows us to end on a note of gratitude. The permission given by the Holy Father in 1951 for the celebration of the Holy Saturday office as a real vigil, with its new form which includes the renewal of baptismal vows, in the vernacular if wished, was greeted with enthusiasm by those of the faithful who were able to assist at the celebration. Their pleasure and fervour was a striking proof of the need for further changes of a similar kind making possible a proper understanding of the liturgy and a reasonable participation in it on the part of lay people; it is a sign that at this point, before and above all, the practical and full participation of the laity in the apostolic work of the Church will be reborn.

<sup>1</sup> Centre de Pastorale Liturgique.

## WALLS ARE CRUMBLING

*Seven Jewish Philosophers Discover Christ*

—by John M. Oesterreicher—

Foreword by Jacques Maritain

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... It is difficult to say what impressed me more about this book—the element of profound erudition or the sense of drama which is somehow conveyed from the first line to the last. ... It is not a coincidence that this book is dedicated to the memory of Newman. There seems to be just that same happy blend of mind and heart.



# JEWISH INFLUENCES ON CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

PAUL TILLICH

IT IS an honor and a joy for me to speak, in the frame of this lectureship which is dedicated to Jewish theology, about the relation of Jewish to Protestant thought. I gladly accepted this invitation because for several decades I have been conducting a never ending conversation with some of my Jewish friends about the relation of their brand of Judaism to my brand of Protestantism. And I am certain that this living disputation will not stop as long as we live. For it is much older than we are; it is as old as Christianity and in some respects even older than that. And it cannot cease before the end of history. It is one of those conflicts which is rooted in human existence itself, in the deepest levels of man's nature.

*The following essay was given recently as one of the Milton Steinberg Lectures in Jewish Theology at the Park Avenue Synagogue in New York City. Professor Tillich, who will give the 1953-4 Gifford Lectures, is professor of Philosophical Theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York, and is the author of THE PROTESTANT ERA and SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY, I (Chicago).*

I do not think it was the intention of those who asked me to speak tonight, that I mention the influence of some Jewish on some Protestant theologians with respect to special points of historical research or philosophical analysis. What I thought to be my task is an elaboration of those elements in religious thought, in which Judaism is a permanent corrective of Christian, and especially of Protestant theology. What is important is not accidental influence exercised by some scholars on some other scholars of the same field but the essential influence which the existence of Judaism and its theological representatives had and should have on Christianity.

I  
YET neither this larger scope nor the fact that I am not an expert in exegetic and historical theology must prevent me from expressing the gratefulness which my colleagues in Old and New Testament exegesis and in Church history feel about the contributions of Jewish scholars in these realms of research. I want to mention a few of these contributions: On the interpretation of the Old Testament there are two main roads of cooperation which proved to be fertile, the one is Biblical archeology and the other is textual criticism. The excavations in Palestine made by both Jewish and Christian scholars have unearthed documents in stone which often have confirmed Biblical reports whose authenticity from a merely exegetic point of view was questionable. At the same time the intensive analysis of the Biblical and other sources by Jewish scholars, helped greatly to establish better texts for many difficult passages. This also worked

in a more conservative direction. The direct and unbroken participation in the tradition of Judaism which is the advantage of the Jewish scholars, makes it possible for them to see genuine tradition in places where Protestant research was inclined to reject its authenticity. On the other hand—to show the mutuality of this cooperation—the relative independence of the Christian scholars of the Jewish tradition made it easier for them to see the history of the religion, of which the Old Testament is the witness, in the light of the general history of religion. The result was the distinction of the basic sources of the Pentateuch, and with it the general outline of the development of Old Testament religion—something which has been accepted by all scholars who apply historical methods to their interpretation of sacred books. Let me mention in this connection only the names of professors Ginsberg and Morgenstern. And as one born a German I also want to refer to the translation of the Bible by Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig which expresses Hebrew rhythms and Hebrew visions in the German language and gives a feeling for the original Biblical text to people who are ignorant of Hebrew.

For the exegesis of the New Testament, Jewish theology has naturally contributed to an understanding of the Jewish scene, within which and against which the early Church arose. These studies have become more and more important, and have shown that some New Testament ideas which were assumed to be dependent on Greek influence can be explained more easily in terms of contemporary Judaism. Again, this does not refute the generally accepted assertion that Judaism in the period of the New Testament was deeply influenced by Persian and Hellenistic ideas. But Jewish theology has an even more important function for the interpretation of the New Testament. It can show, so to speak, the Jewish side of the picture, the tragic element in the conflict between Jesus and the Jews. The Church has almost exclusively spoken of the Jewish guilt in the rejection of Jesus as the Messiah. But Protestant theology which is not bound to any tradition of this kind has to take into historical and systematic consideration the tragic side of the events in the apostolic and post-apostolic period. I realized the practical significance of this problem only when several years ago I was asked by an important Jewish group to deliver a paper surveying the attitude of the Christian churches to Judaism. Besides many other things which were discoveries for me, I found that not later than the Fourth Gospel a development started in which Pilate, the Roman proconsul who crucified Jesus, became more and more the innocent victim of Jewish pressure, forced to act against his own will. In one of the later legends he appears as a Christian martyr and in the Ethiopian Church even as "Saint Pilate". In this way the Church justified its religious anti-Judaism which is the soil on which the political Antisemitism of the last 100 years could grow. Of the New Testament scholars who have made the most important contributions to the interpretation of the events in which the Church is rooted, I want to mention Montefiore and Klausner.

It may be worthwhile to consider at this point the basic religious problem implied in the historical criticism of the Biblical literature. In both Judaism and Christianity, it is the main mark of distinction between the liberal and the orthodox wing of theology. In this respect the theological cleavage does not run

between Judaism and Protestantism but between Jewish and Protestant liberalism on the one side and Jewish and Protestant orthodoxy on the other side. And it seems that in both Jewish and Protestant theology, movements are effective which try to overcome the obsolete cleavage between old fashioned liberalism and a hardened or fanatical orthodoxy. The cooperation of Protestant and Jewish theologians as such, as indicated in the second part of this article, may become an important factor in this respect.

But before this a third realm must be discussed in which Protestant theology has received and must permanently receive the cooperation of Jewish theologians; Church history. A task they both must perform is the description and interpretation of what has been called Jewish Christianity, meaning Christians who came from the Synagogue. They were an important group in the early decades of the Church and disappeared when the Church had been conquered by Christians who came from paganism—the so-called pagan Christians. Protestant theology must understand not only the early but also the lasting significance of Jewish Christianity for the preservation of the prophetic spirit within the Christian churches, and it needs help given to it by Jewish theology.

Another historical problem of the church in which Protestant theology has received and needs help from Jewish research is the relationship of mysticism and Biblical religion. There are Jewish as well as Protestant theologians who believe that there is only the relation of contrast between them. But lately Jewish mysticism has become better known by the work of Jewish scholars, amongst whom I want to mention my friend Gerhard Scholem of the University of Jerusalem. It has become clear that the special type of mysticism which the great physician and philosopher of nature Paracelsus and the Protestant mystic Boehme represent, and which had a tremendous influence on the German classical philosophers, the French philosophers of life, and the Russian philosophers of religion—that all this is deeply influenced by the Cabbala and its mystical speculations about life and evil. We have to accept that there is at least *one* line of Protestant thought which could be called Protestant mysticism, in a particular sense. This is a confirmation of the belief of some Protestant theologians—which I emphatically share—that prophetic and mystical religion are not mutually exclusive and that, therefore, Protestant theology must revise its attitude towards mysticism.

This is even more obvious if we look at another type of Jewish mysticism, which is not speculative like that just described, but which is practical, determined by the law, and present in the daily life of most primitive people. I refer to Hasidism as interpreted by Martin Buber. However the historical analysis given by Buber is valuated, he speaks of the realities of an intensive religious life. And it was important for Protestant theology to find that reality can unite what theological abstraction had separated, the mystical experience of the presence of the divine and the acceptance of moral law in the daily life. This is what present-day Protestant theology can learn from the mystical trends of Jewish theology.

Let me mention a last point in which Jewish historical theology has influenced and can influence Protestant theologians—the relation of religion and



visual art. Since the excavation of the synagogue in Dura, Jewish theologians have discussed the question of artistic symbols in prophetic religion. Everybody knows that Judaism, Islam and Protestantism, especially of the Calvinistic type, have in common a tremendous fear of pictorial representations of the divine. Behind this lies the anxiety about a relapse to idolatry, perhaps the repression of a hidden longing for idolatry. The result can be twofold. It can be that the temple in which the divine is present and an object of adoration and contemplation, is transformed into a school for law, as in Judaism, or a school for doctrinal teaching as predominantly in Protestantism. This takes away the experience of the holy and contributes to the secularization of religion, either in a more moralistic or in a more intellectualistic form. The other way transforms the rejection of pictorial representation of the divine into something positive. It makes the holy felt by creating an empty space whose emptiness, however, is filled with the infinite, just because representations of the finite, of a man and animals and flowers, are excluded. This corresponds with the holy void between God and man, the transcendence of the divine beyond everything human and sub-human. I cannot go here into the question whether, in spite of this basic attitude, visual art can have a function in Judaism and Protestantism beyond the limitations or distortions to which it is subjected today in both of them. But I want to give an example of the collaboration of Jewish and Christian theologians which I have experienced myself. A few years ago Doctor Finkelstein, Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary, invited some theologians and artists who are interested in the relation of religion to art to a discussion group in his seminary. There were representatives of Judaism, Protestantism, Catholicism, Islam and Humanism. We all learned from each other and brought back to our own group the solutions which had been tried in the other groups.

## II

**A**LL that I have discussed up to now was essentially on an historical level. However, since history is always report and interpretation together, many references to systematic problems have been made. They shall, from now on, be the central focus of our consideration.

I begin with the strongest influence of Jewish on Protestant theology of which I know; the influence of Martin Buber's philosophy of religion, especially his doctrine of the I-Thou correlation between God and man. Through the great Swiss theologians, Barth and Brunner, Buber's basic idea has become a common good of Protestant theology and it is still increasing in significance.

It is a reaction against the tendency of the industrial society in which we are living to transform everything into an object, an "It", as Buber says. Men become things, living beings become mechanisms, thinking in universals replaces the encounter with individuals. Men are made into objects of calculation and management, of research and test, into means instead of ends. The I-Thou relation, the person-to-person encounter is lost. God himself becomes a moral ideal or a philosophical concept or a being whose existence or non-existence can be argued for. But a God who is an object is not God at all. God is encountered before anything else and this encounter has the character of an exist-



ential approach to God and against a theoretical one. It is not inadequate to state that Buber, before Kierkegaard became known, introduced the Existentialist point of view into theology. He has made clear again, what theology always should have known, that without an encounter with God in the center and the ground of our personal existence, God is an empty word. This insight was decisive for a reinterpretation of the meaning of revelation in Protestant theology. From an existential point of view it is impossible to equate revelation with information about divine things. The God of the prophets and the Reformers is not an object of information, but he is present in a personal encounter; and such an encounter has revelatory character. One must be in it, in order to experience its revealing power. It is not necessary that everyone receive a new revelation, but everybody must enter the I-Thou correlation between God and man which underlies the great revelatory events of the past. You may be informed about them by religious instruction, by Bible reading, by study. But if this is all, you have information about past revelation, but you don't have revelation. For you, the God to whom the revelation witnesses is still an "It", an object besides other objects of whom you have heard reports, but he is not a Thou for you as an Ego, and he is not an Ego for you as a Thou.

The importance of this insight cannot be overestimated. It liberates religion from the two main forms of an I-It relation between God and man, which have struggled for the last century in Judaism as well as in Protestantism. The so-called orthodox wing and the so-called liberal wing in both religions, are in a permanent danger of objectifying God. Both need the existentialist criticism in which Kierkegaard and Buber join and which underlies much of the latest Protestant theology. Orthodoxy, called in American Protestantism "fundamentalism", considers revelation as a deposit, made by God through prophets and apostles, and now standing within history as an infallible document, legally sealed and proclaimed. God is bound to his words which are printed in a book, in a school, embodied in ritual and sacramental forms. God is in the bondage of his own self-manifestation. There he is to be found and nowhere else. He is a piece of reality. He can be managed in doctrine and cult. This is the point against which the prophetic wrath was directed and against which the existentialist theology of a man like Buber gives us new weapons. And it does not need to fall down on the other side of the edge. It does not need to transform the God of the I-Thou correlation into a normal principle or a logical ideal. This was the permanent danger of the liberal wing of Judaism and Protestantism. God became more and more the symbolic representation for everything which is good in man. He became the ethical principle behind the conventional laws of a bourgeois society which differed very little, whether it had in its background Jewish or Puritan legalism. The religious side of the law disappeared in both groups as unessential, even if it was actually preserved in traditional attendance in synagogue or church. The existentialist approach is like a breaking of the prophetic Spirit into the arid fields of this kind of a moralistic religion which claimed to be intellectually respectable. A way is opened for a religion in which Spiritual power and cognitive honesty are united.

Behind all this stands the God-experience of Judaism, accepted by Christianity when it accepted and defended the Old Testament against pagan trends

entering the Church. But Christianity is always in danger of succumbing to such trends. Christian trinitarianism can threaten its own monotheistic foundation. Theologically this is not necessarily so. But popular Christianity is wide open for pagan influences; and often popular religion forces doctrines upon the theologians against which they try to resist. In this situation the power of the Jewish experience of God can become an ally of Christian theology against its own popular and hierarchical distortions. I do not speak of the thin and abstract monotheism of the 19th century theology, of the God who stands apart from it, leaving it mostly alone, breaking into it from time to time, governing it as lawgiver and judge. This is not the God of Biblical religion. But I speak of the God who is the creative ground of everything and in everything, who is always present, always creating and destroying, always experienced as nearer to ourselves than we ourselves are, always unapproachable, holy, fascinating, terrifying, the ground and meaning of everything that is. This is the living God, dynamic in himself, life as the ground of life, and therefore not so far from the trinitarian God as popular distortions and theological concepts seem to indicate. It is a great experience to feel the permanent awareness of this God in prophetic personalities within present day Judaism. It can awake and has awakened in Protestant theologians a God-consciousness which had a deep influence on their religious life and their theology.

**B**UT even this is not the last and most important point of Jewish influence on Protestant theology. The I-Thou relation is not only a relation between God and man, but also between man and man. Judaism has rightly been described as "ethical monotheism." The monotheism of the Old Testament is not a monotheism of number, but of quality; it does not say that one God is better than many. Why should it be? But Jewish monotheism says that the God of Israel is the God of the world, because he is the God of justice. This alone makes him universal. For justice is, by its very nature, universal. The God of ethical monotheism is both the exclusive and the universal God, and he is exclusive because he is universal, because he represents justice even against his own nation.

This ethical element in Judaism conflicts with the sacramental element in all religions, including Christianity and Judaism itself. The contrast must be considered more fully, because only in relation to it can the whole significance of Judaism as a corrective to Christianity be understood. The holy has a double relation to man, a relation of giving presence and commanding transcendence. The former is the basis for the sacramental type of religious experience, the latter is the basis for the ethical type of religious experience. Every living religion is a union of both types, but usually in such a way that one or the other type prevails. If it becomes not only prevalent but exclusive, the religious experience has ceased. It is replaced by magic if the sacramental side becomes exclusive. It is replaced by morals if the ethical side becomes exclusive. In some forms of sacramental Christianity which have relapsed into primitivism, magic practice has removed genuine religious experience, while in some forms of ethical Judaism ethical legalism has removed genuine religious experience. But these extremes are not the theological problem. The permanent problem in all

religions is the balance between the sacramental and the ethical element. And it is obvious that in Judaism the balance falls more on the ethical, in Christianity more on the sacramental side. Therefore Judaism is a permanent ethical corrective of sacramental Christianity. And this is the main significance of Judaism for Protestant theology.

Every reality is Sacramental in which the holy is experienced as present. In this sense Judaism had and still has strong sacramental elements: Israel is the religion of the covenant which is given, before anything is demanded. The law is felt first of all as a gift, as an eternal divine reality which has appeared in history. It has sacramental quality before it has commanding quality. This, by the way, is something else that Christian theology has to learn from Jewish theologians. Christian theologians often think about the law solely in terms of the Pauline-Lutheran criticism of legalism. Surely they know that the law does not necessarily imply legalism. But since actually the religions of the law have become legalistic religions, they often forget that for the religious Jew the law is not oppressive but liberating. It is grace, before it is demand.

Looking at the content of the law we find that the sacramental and ritual element takes a large place, and everybody knows about its place in the history of the Jewish religion up to the present day. But since the criticism of the cult by the great prophets, Judaism has never forgotten that the condition of its covenant with God is justice, and that without the obedience to the moral law even the strictest fulfillment of the ritual law is without value. Judaism is the religion of expectation. Although the holy is present, the divine promise is not fulfilled. The Messianic age has not yet appeared, the Messiah is still to come. All sacramental activities have an element of anticipation; they are, as Albert Schweitzer has called it, "eschatological sacraments". That which ought to be, the new earth, the rule of God, has not yet come!

In Christianity the decisive event *has* occurred. The Messiah has appeared in an historical person. The holy is present in its abundance. The coming eon has already started. This changes the balance between the sacramental and the ethical. The sacramental is immensely increased in importance. In the sacramental power of the priest, the rule of the Christ is actual. The last stage of history has come. The Church and its institutions are identical with the Kingdom of God. Here it is, beyond criticism, infallible and unchangeable. The prophetic expectations, the demands for justice, the criticisms of the cult: all this is pushed into the underground. Certainly it came out again and again, most explosively in the Reformation. But the sacramental principle, the presence of the Christ, remained the foundation also of the Protestant churches. In them it was not hierarchy and cult which represented the presence of the holy, but it was the Bible and the pure doctrine. But the social emphasis, the demand for justice, was even less emphasized. The Roman hierarchy was replaced by the princes or by members of the ruling classes. This alone made a strong prophetic criticism almost impossible. The Protestant churches accepted the cultural and social patterns of the nations in which they were established. They became nationalistic and consecrated a pagan nationalism. Here are the roots of the tension between Judaism and a nationalistic Christianity. It is the tension between the ethical and the sacramental element. Nationalism denies justice and



is afraid of the prophetic attack on its consecration of injustice. This explains the weakness of the resistance Protestantism showed against the Nazis and the almost complete lack of criticism of their attempt to eradicate the Jewish people. Resistance and criticism were broken by the amalgamation of nation and religion. In Germany this general danger of Protestantism was increased by the Lutheran attitude towards the state and its authorities; the belief that even the worst government has divine authority and must be obeyed in all matters which do not concern the Spiritual life of the Church. Protestant theology had to reconsider its social ethics in the light of these events. But it did so only after the Church itself was persecuted by a paganized nationalism. Perhaps the most important part of Jewish influence in this respect was not what the Jewish theologians had to say but what Judaism represents by its very existence. It puts before the eyes of the Christian world a tradition in which the balance between the sacramental and the ethical element was always on the side of the ethical. It tells the Christian churches that they need a principle of permanent, prophetic self-criticism within themselves and their nations.

But one may ask: Is it not enough that the Church has the Old Testament? Is this not the document of prophetic self-criticism to be used against the Church as it was once directed against the religious nationalism and paganism of old Israel? But history has shown that this is not so. Self-criticism is good, but we all know that it is so much interwoven with self-justification that its transforming effect is minimal if it is not supported by criticism from the outside. This is not an abstract consideration, but it is an autobiographical experience I had in European and especially German Protestantism of the last decades. I cannot imagine that the religious social movements in which I myself participated could have developed without a continuous direct and indirect influence of the prophetic and critical spirit in contemporary Judaism. In the so-called religious-socialist groups a give-and-take between Christians and Jews was taking place from their beginning after the first world war. The interpretation of history, created by these groups and given to the Christian churches as an addition to their theological substance, would not have been possible without the Jewish influence. And since these ideas have permeated all Protestant churches, American as well as European, to a considerable extent, one can see here the climax of Jewish influence on Protestant theology. It is the general reawakening of the prophetic spirit in the Protestant churches which is the most important fruit of the contemporary reception of Jewish elements by Protestant theology.

It is not my task, and it would be beyond my power, to show the other side of the picture, the Christian influence on Jewish theology. It certainly does exist. But I am happy if I have succeeded in my short survey in showing that in our period something is going on between Jewish and Christian thought which has not happened since the two religions parted in life, thought and destiny in the first and second centuries. There is a new situation today: Jewish thinking can be received by Protestant theology. And as a Protestant theologian I am glad and grateful for the gifts we have already received.



# THE MEANING OF THE MOMENT

GUSTAVE WEIGEL

IT WILL be wise to explain the terms of the title before we do anything else. This will also be useful, for it will manifest the task that we have set up and so put us in a position to tackle it intelligently.

We must define the word "meaning." This term is treacherous, because it seems so obvious but when we try to explain its import, we feel quite inadequate. It is like the word "time." For as St. Augustine said, if you do not ask me what it means, I know; but if you ask me, I do not.

Meaning is a correlative to understanding. Now understanding can be opposed to mere experience. We have all experienced a television apparatus, for we have seen the pictures that are produced by such a machine. However, we do not understand it. We cannot make one, nor can we grasp the theories involved in the organization of the mechanism. When we understand the inner workings and the theory, we have grasped the meaning. When we experience, we only establish contact with an object. The man who made the plans for the first television, obviously never saw one, but he understood a television set, and because he understood, he could make one. To understand I must grasp the sheerly intelligible element of a reality. This element makes the reality luminous to the thinking subject. Because of such a grasp he can answer the child's question "what" and "why." Much has been written on the nature of meaning, and it would hardly be to our purpose to go into that question, though I personally follow Plato's doctrine on the subject. Let it suffice to say that meaning is the answer to the question "what" and "why." The child is so dedicated to these two words that he annoys his elders by using them *ad nauseam*, but the child in this matter shows itself to be human. Our difficulties with the "New Art" arise because we do not know what it means, and we feel hopelessly confused by some of the spokesmen of the new movement who tell us that it does not mean anything. We cannot tolerate that reply, because we spontaneously believe that all things must have meaning. If the thing is static or statically considered we ask "what is it" and if the thing is in flux, we ask "why is it moving?" Meaning therefore is the answer to the eternal questions, what and why.

Moment is an easier word to face. It only means, now. However, in this discussion we are considering the now as an element in a larger global period. The now cannot be understood without investigating its roots and flower. Our moment therefore includes all the years from 1918 to some date as yet not discernible.

In the light of these explanations we can say that our discussion wishes to convey an intelligible grasp of the historical period which is pointed for us by 1952. Let us get down to our task.

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IT IS my contention that our moment began in 1918. Such a contention implies that an historical period ended at the same time. History is continuous; there are no gaps in it. We can distinguish parts but the parts touch and the new part flows from the old without any interruption of the historical process. Out of 1918 rose our moment and to understand it even as different we must understand the color of the moment which ushered in our own.

1918 ended the First World War which began in 1914. The human situation before 1914 was marked with something like stability. Those of us who lived in that time still think of it as a period of calm, repose and order. So much was this the case, that the slogan for the Harding presidential campaign of 1920 was: "Back to normalcy." The unquestioned order of the period before 1914 seemed to the men of the '20's natural and normal, because it was seemingly stable. What were its characteristics?

In order to make living together secure, the late 19th century, which historically would include the first 13 years of the new century, grouped men into three classes. This grouping was set and there was little flux from one class to another. The top class we can call aristocracy, for they considered themselves to be the best and they were commonly called "the betters." This class, numerically very slight in comparison with the totality of mankind, had first call on the good things which the earth produces. They were well fed, sometimes too well fed as the prevalence of gout in those days showed. They were well clad with the best apparel that men could devise in terms of art and utility. They were well housed in mansions conspicuous for their amplitude, elegance and comfort as far as the technological competence of the time allowed. They were served in their human needs, so that they had leisure aplenty. The best of mankind's thought and creation was at their disposal. They read the world's best literature at school and at home. They hung the world's finest pictures in their salons. They held high discourse in their drawing rooms. They also directed the destinies of their communities.

How did one get into this privileged group? Some by birth, though others could enter because of success in acquiring wealth, for the real basis of membership was the possession of wealth. There were two sectors of the group. One sector in terms of inheritance possessed family land, much of it. Their titles to this land were also titles of nobility, and so they were nobles. The land was tilled by others, but the best part of the produce went to the owner and his family, which included "his sisters, his cousins and his aunts." The other sector drew its wealth from industry. They were the industrial and commercial tycoons. The nobles considered them somewhat inferior because their wealth was relatively new, but wealth was power and the industrialists were more numerous and really more powerful, because they controlled more wealth. In the pageantry of tradition they were not so conspicuous, but in the council chambers of government their voices were more penetrating.

Below this class there was another. We call them the Bourgeoisie or Middle Class. As far as secular goods were concerned, they had their share, though it was not excessive. Their food was adequate; their clothes good; their contact with the thought and art of humanity sufficient. However, they had no excess

of wealth and they could only make ends meet, and at times this was not too easy. They did not control the destinies of their communities, but they had a conspicuous part and they raised their voice, often enough shrilly. Numerically they were about a fourth of the total community, and they were growing in number.

What were the signs of membership in this class? They were all suppliers of socially needed goods which demanded special training or talent in the supplier: professional men like doctors and lawyers, engineers and architects; clergymen of the diverse religions of the community; teachers and professors of the youth of society; artists in language, music, mass and form; bureaucratic masters of organizational techniques in politics, production, or distribution; the foremen of the laboring class. Their goods were scarcer because their numbers were relatively fewer, and on the marketplace their product was in consequence more precious.

At the bottom of the scale was the proletariat. It was the most numerous class of all, counting about seven tenths of the earth's population. These enjoyed but little of the earth's goods. Their food at best was adequate and at worst deficient. Their clothes in quality and workmanship were poor, except for the colorful costumes of rural traditions, worn rarely and handed down from father to son. The worker's house was mean in the cities and if less mean for the small agricultural land owner, not more comfortable. Leisure was not abundant for this class, and they imbibed little of the learned lore of the ages, for they could not afford long schooling and the development of taste for deeper reading. In Western Europe and North America the vast majority had acquired the skills of reading, writing and calculating, but in Eastern Europe and the Colonial lands the vast majority did not progress so far. Yet this proletariat conserved better than the other classes the *mores* of the past, and as a rule the *Weltanschauung* of an earlier time was languidly conserved in this group. In the direction of the life of the community, their contribution was slight. In the West they could exercise the right of the ballot, but their votes were managed so that they had but little true initiative in making policies, domestic or foreign.

This proletariat was divided into two sections. The western proletariat of Europe and North America precariously occupied a more decent level of living. However, the more numerous proletariat of Asia, Africa and Latin America were in a position that dangerously approached the subhuman. In times of calamity, drought, pest and famine, they slipped below the level. The situation of the colonial worker was worse than that of his fellows in the West because his economy was dependent on, and exploited by, occidental entrepreneurs. They could only produce raw materials for the western consumers and manufacturers. There was little opportunity to elaborate locally the wealth natural to their regions.

The necessity of belonging to this class was hereditary. If the parents had no wealth nor the capacity to produce an article of higher value for the world's community, the children in turn could only offer their undifferentiated physical energies to the economic functioning of society. For such a contribution the return was never very high, and over vast stretches of the world where such energies abounded, the return was only sufficient for sustenance. The Americas

were a source of hope for the European proletariat. The necessity of building up the new continent and the abundant wealth of a thinly populated area gave to the worker a much richer return for his contribution than in crowded Europe, which was already structured and fixedly divided. In consequence, waves of European workers migrated to Canada, the United States and Latin America.

What constituted the proletariat? The employment of the breadwinner of the family group. They were the tillers of the soil, either in small plots owned or rented by the family, or by hiring their services to landowners. They worked in the factories and in the enterprises of transportation. They were the little artisans, shopkeepers and their help. They served the aristocrats as domestic servants or the government in those tasks that required little training and no specialised skills. They performed the humbler services to the community in the creation and maintenance of order, sanitation and public utilities.

These three classes lived side by side, dependent on each other. They were united into national communities functioning civilly through parliamentary organisms which in theory represented the whole people. As a matter of fact, the machine of government was controlled by a clique subject to the veto and often enough to the initiatives of the aristocrats. To insure the cohesion of the three classes into a communal solidarity, governments tended to control ever larger areas of the lives of the individual citizens and of the citizen groups. In the Americas and England, this tendency was resisted, but in Europe and in the lands imperialistically or economically controlled by Europe the tendency was increasingly effective.

THIS was the paradox of the moment before ours; it was simultaneously centrifugal and centripetal. Class divisions made for the loosening of the tie that bound all men to the same community, but the government acted effectively to bind all members together by trying to regulate factors of community life where the classes by themselves would only tend to separate one from the other. In any individual community the government was the agency that produced a balance of power in favor of the stability of the *status quo* and in the international community the same tactic was pursued by one great power—Great Britain. There were many other powers, each anxious to expand. The four great powers were Britain, with its mastery of the sea and commerce, the two Germanies which included the stronger German Reich and the precarious Austro-Hungarian union of different nations, France and Russia. There were minor powers in Europe: ailing Turkey, Italy, Spain and the Scandinavian countries. There was too a growing imponderable across the sea, the United States, fiercely isolationist in its outlook but of great potential strength. To prevent the expansion of any power with the consequent suppression of another, Britain always threw its weight against the challenger, making open conflict too dangerous for any one. Britain could do this because she had no intention of expanding. Her colonial empire was vast enough, vaster than anything that had yet been formed by history. Her dominion included Canada which was immense; she had foot-holds in Latin America; she commanded the Asiatic world through her possession of India and Australia; parts of lower Africa was hers; while Egypt and Mediterra-



nean Africa were subject communities. The only real threat to stability was the growing power of Germany in industry, commerce and military strength, but the relations between Britain and Germany were excellent, and in many ways they were natural allies.

Nothing would be falsier than to suppose that historic moments can be explained merely by the material factors contained in them. Wealth and power drives are the engines that make men and communities move, but they themselves need direction. Sheer pursuit of wealth and sheer pursuit of power produce chaos by dissolving society as a human configuration. Ideas restrain and canalise the lusts of men. The moment before ours had its dynamic ideas, and without them we cannot understand the moment that posthumously brought forth ours. The basic idea-synthesis of any group or age constitutes the religion of that period. However, religions, though primarily ideas, yet are also institutions. Often enough religious institutions outlast their generating idea. When this happens, the institution is still around, and may have an impressive and palpable presence, but its dynamic power, the idea, is no longer functioning in society. The typical religion of the moment is not yet institutionalised and the existing religious institutions are considered by many as colossal fossils, relics of the past when they were alive.

In the 1914 world there were many religious institutions in the world. The East was still following the patterns set ages ago, but the idea of mystical renunciation at the heart of those patterns was rediscovered by few men, and in one man, Mahatma Gandhi, renunciation was being studied and practised in order to make it acquisitive by ricochet. In the languid Turkish empire of the Middle East, Islam was active like a zombie. In the West, Christianity was the generic form of institutionalised religion and it took on three forms. The Russian world was Orthodox, but Orthodoxy was an institution completely controlled and employed by the Russian government. There were still saints among the monks but superstition was heavily mixed with the religion of the people, as that strange figure, Rasputin, showed. In the nordic world Protestantism in one form or other took care of the spiritual needs of the people, but the Protestant theologians addicted to liberalism and modernism had washed out of Christianity all that was characteristic and proper to it. Catholicism had a vast diaspora spread all over the world, but its consolidated strength was in the Latin lands. In these lands it was subjected to attack by thinkers and rulers simultaneously, and its influence on society was very weak, so weak that it gave its adversaries the feeling that it was a dying thing. No historic religion was decisive anywhere.

THE nascent religion that was working in government, in the universities and on the streets was an optimistic positivistic humanism which in one word we now call scientistic naturalism. (In parenthesis let me say that this is not the same as science, a very innocent thing, but rather a transcendental philosophy parasitically attaching itself to the evident successes of science.) In terms of politics it was called liberalism. This new metaphysics produced a morality and a *Weltanschauung*. If Christianity can be briefly described in the words of Christ (Mat. 6, 33): "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness

and all these things shall be added on to you," then scientific naturalism could be described as: "Seek ye first the kingdom of man and secular well being, and all things will come eventually." The basic belief was that this earth could be changed into a real paradise, where all the desires of man could be satisfied perfectly. The means to do it were science and its derivative, technology. The sufficiency and inexhaustible potency of visible nature was taken for granted. Equally taken for granted was a push in reality whereby it was always working upwards to a happier arrangement of things, and consequently progress was written in the marrow of being, and the longer that humanity would exist, the better it would get. Poverty, disease and ignorance would disappear thanks to science and natural evolution. All that was needed was time. The rich man need not do anything, because all men would reach his condition with the advances of science and technology. The poor man need not revolt, because soon he too would have plenty of the good things of earth. For the moment, only one thing had to be pushed: positivistic science. If in the old Protestant days man was saved by faith alone, in 1912 man was to be saved by science alone. If in the older times government fostered and protected religion, now government fostered and protected science. The reverence that once went to the clergy, now went to the workers in the laboratory and to the practitioners of the theories there worked out.

In this scheme of things God was not important. For the perfect adepts of the new vision, there was no other God than the omnipotent powers of nature, which had created heaven and earth, and which had saved man by becoming human through science. The more timid devotees of the new faith did not dare to go that far and still kept a belief in God, but he was pale, veiled and distant. His voice should not be heard and his role was to stimulate men to be more human, for in being truly human they would be divine. Liberal theology had deprived Christ of his divinity and God of his transcendence.

There was a paradoxical phenomenon contemporaneous with this religious creed. There was a little heretical sect which enthusiastically accepted the basic doctrines of the prevailing philosophy, but which believed that the optimistic push in history demanded a revolution to end the nationalist class system, and that it was the function of all good men and true to bring about this event, and they certainly would because it was inevitable in the drives native to history. This sect was called Marxist Socialism, or just plain Socialism. Needless to say, the aristocrats did not care for this eccentric form of the "true faith," and most of the Middle Class looked on with displeasure, though some of the Middle Classes considered it with longing eyes, and the more daring souls joined this little nonconformist chapel.

In the ranks of the proletariat the new faith was not formally accepted. The older religious norms for human behavior were still recognized as valid. However, the worker's adhesion to the religious institutions at hand was not too firm. A small sector actually went over to the Marxist heretical form of secularism, deliberately and knowingly. Another small sector retained an ardent faith and devotion to the religions of their fathers. Yet the middle mass would do neither. The workers lived together in greater numbers and in closer proximity. The norms of behavior were still the ancient norms, and it was difficult for a

member of such a neighborhood to flaunt these norms, because the community would ostracise him. Yet the vision of the churches was no longer vibrant in the class. Life had been secularised and the search for material well-being was universal, with little account made for the Kingdom of God and its justice. The proletariat did not as a whole jettison its traditional religion, but it did relegate it to a subordinate role in life, which of course is a practical rejection, for religion must come first by its own logic, and to give it a secondary place is equivalent to its denial.

Naturalism by itself alone would be a weak religion. It promises only an inevitable heaven. It has no hell and no purgatory. It knows no cross and it will have no dark night of the soul. It does not impel men to sacrifice and renunciation; quite the contrary. It can palliate suffering by considering it the birthpain of a brighter posterity, but men at large feel no love for posterity, least of all a posterity which merely replaces them after they have gone down into nothing. Man needs a transcendental love object, which he can meet here and now. The individualism of the age produced only one such object—the collective ego which was the nation. Nationalism was the romantic element of the vision of the moment that preceded ours. Naturalism was not joyfully accepted, and in its acceptance there were varying degrees of adhesion, but nationalism was fervently universal. Aristocrat and peasant loved their nation. Atheist and orthodox loved the fatherland. Like true romantic love, it was uncritical. An American had phrased it well: My country, right or wrong, but my country! Nationalism was ambitious, selfish and overweening. It considered every other nation a rival and a possible foe. Almost every nation was looking for expansion and colonial possessions. The flag and the army were always sure of an enthusiastic reception, for did not our banners make tyrannies (i.e. other nations) tremble, and was not the army and the navy forever?

It was a strange religion. It had two contradictory elements: naturalism, which had killed gods, and nationalism which had created a new one to the image and likeness of local man.

**N**ATIONALISM, without which naturalism could not live at all, was dynamite. An inadvertent jolt can make it calamitously explosive. Such an inadvertence took place in 1914. The national power systems, seemingly in equilibrium, clashed for four years. The quarrel was a consuming one, for scientific technology used great quantities of the limited stockpile of physical energy at the disposal of the combatants. However, the opponents could not defeat each other, and they reached a stalemate in utter exhaustion. The war settled no major issues but it did destroy much more than the people of 1918 appreciated. Russia collapsed in structure, and the pieces were being put together in a new pattern, the pattern of the Marxist heresy. Turkey ceased to be of importance. Germany was paralysed. Britain and France were impoverished. A new great power emerged, the United States of America. Its great wealth had been left intact, for the costs of the war were not beyond its means. Yet there was an aloofness on the part of America, which by tradition feared any entanglements with Europe.

THE destruction and suffering caused by the war were without equal in the history of man prior to the event. The armies were quantitatively greater and were numbered in millions instead of thousands—and the armies were all set on destruction. Destruction was not limited to a narrow battle field, because the war took place in Russia, the Balkans, Italy, Belgium and France. What was more, a new threat against civilization presented itself. Destruction could reach any spot because of the aeroplane. Its role in the war was not very great, but its potentialities were evident.

The subsequent fruits of the war were also depressing. The war brought about collapse. In the light of this collapse, it was most difficult to believe that nature was irrepressibly moving to an ever better world. The optimism of the pre-war naturalism looked absolutely ridiculous. It was equally evident that nationalism was a dangerous vision of life. In consequence, Wilson's dream of internationalism was accepted and the League of Nations was born. However, Wilson had no dynamism available to make the League work other than parliamentarism, a device which was nationalistic by tradition and which could be used without giving right reason or the common good a place. The League did not destroy nationalism, because the only instrument to make it work was nationalism. The world suddenly saw that parliamentarism was not a dyke against injustice and unreason, and many men became disgusted with it.

The collapse of Europe did not mean the destruction of Europe; it merely demanded reconstruction. But construction needs a plan, and a plan supposes a vision. The old vision went down in the collapse and something new had to take its place. The moulding of the new vision is the work of our moment, for with the collapse of the West in 1918, a new era was born, and that era is our moment. The collapse had shown clearly that the unshakeable values of the pre-war were not unshakeable at all. Some were shaken right out of existence, and those which still remained, had an anemic look. If the war shook the world materially and spiritually, the post-war years shook the modes of society. Nothing was considered valuable just because it had been around for a long time. Every value was questioned, and every questioning brought forth some answer, and answers were respectable only if they went counter to what had been believed before.

Class distinction became odious, and tended to disappear mainly because excess wealth was being confiscated by society. Naturalism was subjected to criticism. The result was that some dropped it altogether and returned to the older religious views. Karl Barth taught an utter unworldliness, based on despair for the world and a blind trust in God, who leads and meets the individual in ineffable fashion. A French group composed of men like Paul Claudel, Jacques Maritain, Charles Péguy, Ernest Psichari, found a rescue for thought and vision in the Catholic metaphysics of the Middle Age rather than in the agnostic positivism of the pre-war. Movements of this kind could be found everywhere, but they never became torrential. The Catholic Church, after the bankruptcy of her erstwhile foes, took on a new vigor and a new respectability as manifest in writers like Chesterton and Belloc. Yet her new respectability and renewed strength did not make her determinant anywhere.



The sincere naturalists themselves reexamined their positions, and found out that it was better to drop the dogma of inevitable progress, and they substituted in its stead the notion of free collaboration of man with science in order to bring about utopia. They admitted that things did not get better of themselves; man had to make them better, and man could fail in the task. However, only through positivistic naturalism could man make them better. This message was not as consoling as the old one, but it still had its comfort, for at least it left us with the illusion that we could of ourselves without aid from without, save mankind by the simple process of looking at reality without prejudices and then constructing it in accord with our desires. Failures might come, but by failure we learned. Error was now very important. It should not be the cause of despair, but only a way of learning to make all things better. Trial and error by the scientific method, that was the new naturalism. It was a new optimism, subtle and vague. We no longer were told that heaven will come, come what may, but rather heaven can come if we only put our minds and wills to it.

Pre-war naturalism had been too deeply entrenched in society for it to disappear. It stayed on as the prevailing mood, though it came forth in a different dress. Though it stayed, it was not as proud as before, and it knew that many were looking at it with suspicion and hostility.

When parliamentary internationalism failed, nationalism also came back. The old nationalism was willing to be a co-partner with scientistic naturalism, but the new one wished to be its lord, using it for its ends which were not subject to any rational control at all. It first rose up in languid Italy, and made that people buzz. It then raised its head in Germany, galvanizing a nation from lassitude into fever. The new nationalism developed technology but it had no use for scientism. Visions were formed by blind upsurges, divorced from reason. These visions pushed men to action, and for action they took advantage of technology. Parliamentarism was swept off the board, and arbitrary dictatorship of a small clique took its place. Nature was not God; God was not God; the Nation was the absolute demanding God, who would tolerate no gods beside himself. Fana-ticism took the place of intelligence; passion was more important than reflection.

This was most unpalatable doctrine for the lands where naturalism was not tied to the service of nationalism. What is more, it was quite evident that the new nationalism would only wind up in war before reconstruction had been achieved. There could be no other outcome. Scientistic naturalism with its roots in the individualism of the past could hardly be kindly to totalitarian nationalism. However, it admired its own heresy, Communism, as the older Marxist socialism was now called. Russia was being rebuilt along Marxist lines. A literal following of the gospel according to Karl Marx proved impossible, and Nicolai Lenin made adaptations which seemed most un-Marxian and Joseph Stalin retreated more and more from the orthodox doctrine. Yet in Russia they were proceeding according to the naturalistic formula—trial and error. Science alone was given the role of directing life and constructing a new society. From the naturalistic point of view this was good, and if there were facets of communist society which appalled the men of the West, these were overlooked generously. After all, we must not be dismayed by errors. The principal thing was the progress that was being made. The Russians were marching toward Utopia on

the right road, the road of scientific naturalism. The academic people, the new professors of the world's theology, were all for Russia. In fact, many were of the opinion that naturalism must lead to communism—and they were probably quite right.

One effect of the collapse of Europe was a restlessness of the colonial territories. Asia was in a ferment. China was awakening and Japan became a world power with nationalism as its philosophy. Latin America realised that its situation was revolutionary, but the discontent of the masses was diverted from the true foe, local exploitation, by whipping up nationalism.

Everywhere the old *mores* fell to pieces. The Turks abolished the veil for their women. The East put on western clothes. Sex taboos were attacked in Europe and America. The financial crisis of 1929-30 made the proletariat aware of the fact that the commonwealth could be tapped to give them comforts which previously had been acquired only by work. It was a time of confusion, uneasiness and insecurity. Nothing was stable. It came to a head in a new war which the nationalistic communities waged in the belief that the other nations were not strong enough to meet the flood of their passion rendered formidable by technology. The nationalistic powers were mistaken. The other peoples did still believe in something that was left over from the past, the dignity and liberty of the individual. In another orgy of destruction the struggle was waged with the total suppression of nationalism as an organised threat. The new struggle left all the European powers, but Russia, sick unto death. The United States alone had strength enough to take over the cause of freedom but the United States was not ready for the role nor very willing to assume it. The colonial lands took advantage of the European debility, and they demanded successfully economic and political independence. Asia was in revolution and finally the Islamic lands followed its example.

THIS is the situation that faces mankind now. The West has not abdicated its ecumenical throne, but the throne is being fought for by two contestants. Communism is one claimant, which would regiment mankind dictatorially to a utopia built ruthlessly on scientific humanism, where nonconformism must pay the price of death. Against this force there is the other vision which is torn from within by two conflicting ideas: a love of liberty in terms of the worth of the individual person, and a faith in a deterministic naturalism as the only means for saving man. This latter vision is called democracy. In both camps the hunger for power is moving some reckless men to dominion and the struggle is not merely a clash of ideologies, but also a struggle between selfishnesses. It is a mistake to think that all that is taking place today is only a battle between two visions of man. Stubborn, cynical individuals, intoxicated by the prospect of power, are as much to blame as the divergent philosophies. On the other hand, we must not think that the struggle in the West is merely between two power groups, indifferent to ideologies. No man and no group can exercise power without a following, and people follow a man only in so far as he is the incarnation of an idea that satisfies them. The power seekers, willy-nilly, must propose a vision and to some degree must believe in it and try to realise it in history.

The tacit postulate of the two western forces is that whoever wins the West, wins the East as well. This postulate is not as necessarily valid as the West unreflectively presumes. The Far East is not interested in our world views. The Middle East is quite indifferent to our philosophies. They are in a revolutionary moment, and by inner tensions they are exploding. If they watch the West, it is not because of the ideas of the West, but because of the threat or aid of the occident. The Chinese people is not communistic in its world view, even though its government is committed to the communistic theory, and as long as communism is not a general Chinese faith, China is not ideologically Marxist, though politically it has joined hands with Russia. The reason for the political gesture is the revolutionary desire of the Chinese to free themselves from exploitation and interference, which they identify with western rather than Russian influence. The Japanese are not democratic in the occidental meaning of that obscure term, but because of the revolutionary moment in their history they must join the western democracies to realise their own development, and as soon as they can, they will free themselves from the encumbering linkage to the West.

There are two enigmatic elements which help to confuse the general picture. First we note the rumblings of Islam which stretches continuously from the African Atlantic right across to the Philippine Islands in the Far Pacific. The Moslems are technologically unequipped but by that very fact they are also immune to a technological attack. Atom bombs in the desert neither hurt them nor aid their foe. Their loose organization prevents them from being crushed while their smoldering ardor can constantly break out over a wide area. The second element is the future of Latin America. The Latin continent is rich in raw materials of all kinds. Today the total Latin population is greater than the population of the United States. The Latin Americans are not yet developed industrially but are making impressive beginnings. They are divided within their lands and within the total Latin setup. The Latin Americans certainly have not come to any maturity, but who can say that this maturity can not come sooner than we think? The latent dangers in the Southern continent are the deep *anti-Yanqui* feeling that is part of their culture and the strong instinct for arbitrary power that manifests itself in our Iberian neighbors.

AS IS evident from this rapid analysis, our moment is an unstable one. We are trying to construct an ecumenical framework that will be stable, but only instability faces us at home and abroad. What makes us especially uneasy is the lack of any general belief in a vision which could produce a common framework. We are materially advanced but we are spiritually retarded. This is a dreadful state, for in a life-time it is possible to lose our material organization. We are all so narrowly specialised in our work and so dependent on other specialists that we would be helpless to take care of our ordinary needs if only a few industries were to fail. An automobile is useless if there is no gasoline, and if there are no refineries, crude oil cannot be changed into gasoline. Our large urban centers depend on intricate systems of communication, and New York would be emptied in a month if the railroads and trucks found no safe roads into the city. New Yorkers on the country side would be sorry figures indeed.



They would know nothing of the soil or animal husbandry; they could not make the necessary tools, for they do not even know what they are. They could not spin nor weave. The tractors would rust in garages, mute symbols of a civilization that was knowledgeable but so rigidly organized that the failure of one part would destroy the whole, with no possibility of restoring itself.

The inertia that is characteristic of all things, is also characteristic of man. Customs, habits, organizational patterns come and they can linger on even after the death of the idea that produced them. The Colosseum in Rome is still standing but it has not been used as a circus in 1500 years. Men today still have buttons on their sleeves, though the sleeves have not been open in a hundred years. Stable patterns for shifting variables, because of inertia, retain their stability in spite of the variability of the elements combined. Minor integrated patterns serve a general pattern, but a general pattern corresponds to a general idea. It can incorporate existing subsidiary patterns, and it must do so, because a complete reconstruction of all things relevant to man is humanly impossible. Yet the over-all pattern changes the meaning of the subsidiary patterns, and the over-all pattern is the product of a single vision of total reality. The tragic meaning of our moment is that its working vision of total reality is not creative. Scientistic humanism is not creative in spite of the fact that it was formed to be creative, for its formers overlooked a fundamental truth in humanity. The human being will not exert himself to be human, because he knows that he is human already. Naturalistic humanism urges man to be human and by human it means being comfortably what observation shows man to be. We are told to exert ourselves creatively to be what we evidently are. That is a meaningless message. We create only that which is not, and we enjoy, or adjust to, that which is. To make man work in the difficult task of being a man, you must urge him to be more than a man. Man can be moved efficaciously to action, only if by work he will be a superman, and between a superman and a godly man there is not much practical difference. To tell that man is himself divine, is something no man believes, for he knows that the divine is a richer thing than humanity. Even to tell a man to sweat in order to be free like the gods, is not enough. You must tell him what he is to be free *for*. If he is told that he will be free from the marks of humanity; disease, imperfection, ignorance, fatigue, sorrow, he knows that this is not true. Naturalistic humanism asks man to lift himself by his boot-straps, and every attempt to apply this counsel will only bring about frustration. Naturalistic humanism can work temporarily only in a society where institutions of another time with a different vision are still operative by inertia. Once their saving action slows down to a halt, naturalistic humanism will have no power at all. It has a specious value, only because we overlook its killing weakness by ignoring it in the ordinary things of life, and in terms of those ordinary things we live. Yet the more popular naturalistic humanism becomes as a societal vision, the faster the old inherited institutions will collapse, for they were erected by a totally different vision.

The future of our moment is mysterious. It is certain that we are not going back to the world of 1912. It is not certain that we are not going back to 512 or 612. The predominant vision of naturalism is not going to save us, whether it be the naturalism that is willing to discard human freedom, or naturalism



that wishes hopefully to retain it. If the men of our moment finally accept universally the religion of naturalism, we are doomed as was every moment that took that religion. Naturalism is a religion and it has a simple theology. If the naturalist explanation of God is correct, then God is something made to the image and likeness of man, and in the universe there is nothing higher than man, and the man is the law of the universe. Man is God, and that the old Prophets called idolatry, and they ridiculed it as nonsense.

Our liberal theologians, who adapt Christianity to naturalism, cannot help us by teaching that God is a way of speaking of the deeper desires of the human heart. If this were true, God still would be human, and that is still idolatry in spite of its obscuring fuzziness.

LET me sum up the meaning of our moment. It is a time whose mission is to reconstruct society, for the world of 1914 is gone. Ever since 1918 we have been trying to rebuild it. We have patently not succeeded. The reason for our failure is multiplex. One of the elements is that there are power-hungry men effectively seizing dominion and using it to satisfy their lust for more and more power. The faith preached by these men is not the explanation of their action, for with any or no faith they would continue their course, which is dictated by instinct and not by intelligence. The second element is the awakening of the vast colonial masses to the general and effective realisation that foreign direction of their destinies is not to their advantage. Hence all of Asia, much of Africa, and to a lesser degree Latin America, are refusing the direction of the West. This awakening is not due to any *Weltanschauung* these peoples have, but due to the unhappy material condition in which they find themselves. It is for them a revolutionary moment, which inevitably came to birth. The third element is the lack of a creative faith in the world at large, and of the dominant West in particular. This would not be so disastrous if communal effort would be guided by a vision, even though not a genuine faith, yet effectively creative. De facto, the West works on the basis of naturalistic humanism. It has two conflicting forms: democratic naturalism, which wishes to salvage large chunks of personal freedom from communal power, and communist naturalism which wishes to suppress any personal freedom in order to erect quickly and logically a stable, productive economic framework whose automatic fruits would be a happy human life. Both of these forms are agreed on naturalistic humanism which basically announces that man's secular happiness is the sole concern of society and it is to be achieved by man's rational effort with no direction from any norm not derived from man's experience of himself. Material man is the absolute, and all other absolutes are only ideal projections of this man.

This naturalism is not universally accepted as a living faith. The colonial lands are only superficially committed to it. Even in the West, there are vital groups that reject it, and larger groups which use it pragmatically though they do not subscribe to it in terms of an inner conviction. Yet all groups, colonial and western, to some degree are infected enough by it to make naturalistic humanism the working vision of our time. This gives the power seekers their instrument, for they win to themselves the energies of the public by presenting

themselves as incarnations of naturalism, which by default has usurped the place of a true faith in contemporary society. Many of our modern philosophers are defending, spreading and deepening this philosophy of life. Because of their work, this kind of thinking is the atmosphere of the centers which formulate the intellectual commitments of the community.

As long as this philosophy is in the ascendancy, our moment is a failure in its mission to construct the social configurations for a good life. The naturalistic vision can be propitious to the advance of technology, and the Atom Bomb, television and radar are the best proof that it is. However, it cannot give to men the will and the capacity to construct a soul-saving society. The understanding of the atom can be used for destruction just as it can be used for construction. Naturalism cannot teach me how to use it for construction as long as it tells me that the end of life is the fulfillment of the desires derived from my instincts. Beyond these instincts naturalism sees nothing, nor does it believe that they can be controlled. Naturalism has brought forth a new and admirable science with which it hopes to handle the instincts, namely psychiatry. However, a naturalistic psychiatrist does not teach control of the instincts but only the adjustment of instinctive drive to actual environmental conditions. The naturalistic psychiatrist is as helpless to tell me where I must go as any other naturalist. Frankly, he does not believe that I go anywhere but am carried to point "X", which he piously hopes will be better than point "Y", but he has no rational basis for this hope.

**I**N THE light of these reflections one can only be pessimistic. If the present trend moves along its own course, eventually there will only be chaos and then jungle life. Will humanity follow this road? Who can say? Must it follow this road? Definitely not. It can change its course at any time. It will change its course sometime, at least once breakdown has shattered everything. Man has a stubborn impulse to live and to live with his fellows. This very instinct will lead him to a world view more constructive than naturalism. However, in such an hypothesis, the change of views would not be in our moment but in another.

What would lead us to a better world and a better use of the technology at our command? Only the universal submission of man to an absolute, commanding, personal God, transcendental and infinitely greater than man. This message drives the naturalists to fury, for it is their sincere belief that this kind of god was slain in the last century, and a return to him means obscurantist retrogression. The moment is too grave to permit dialectical controversy with such willful men. When you change roads and find that the new road is leading you to a swamp and not to a protecting city, you go back on the road to the point where the other road led elsewhere. You do not keep on the new road just because in the past some one deliberately chose to change paths. Change is not necessarily for the better, and only the Pollyanna attitude of the 19th century romantically believed that all change led to a greater good.

Why is the belief in God, transcendental and commanding, necessary for man? Because in society man must control his instincts. This he will not do, unless he lives in the firm conviction that laws have been made for him per-

sonally by a being with whom he cannot dispute, to whom he must joyfully submit. A police-state is no such being, for we know that the police-state is a human thing, and why should one man submit to another? He can be coerced, it is true, but universal coercion is the dehumanisation of man and the ruin of society. The romantic naturalists think that they can achieve submission by enlightening men to the necessity of self-control, or as they put it, "adjustment", in order for men to live together, as men sincerely want to and always will. This is a pretty dream. Man will not control himself in terms of enlightened selfishness. Selfishness rejects control, and the more enlightened it is, the more ways it will find to escape control. Some romantic souls can achieve a high morality because morality is for them the supreme good, but humanity at large has no such love and respects morality grudgingly and not from loving spontaneity. Unless the average man recognises that control is imposed on him by the Lord with whom he cannot debate and whose infinite power will avenge the violation of his will, man will not control himself. The community which wholeheartedly and integrally believes in a commanding transcendental God, needs no police-force.

Belief in God is not sufficient, though it is fundamental. There is needed too a belief in a kind, wise and directing God. There is need of belief in a final human destiny greater than the momentary satisfaction of instincts. Such a belief will accept the inevitable shortcomings of life as part of a mission to work out a happier salvation. Wealth is not the goal that is important, neither is power, nor health, nor fame, nor pleasure. The important thing is to do the will of God who has planned things for our ultimate good and for the good of the whole. The prayer of such a believer is: Thy will be done. The practical plan of such a man is to seek first the Kingdom of Heaven and its righteousness, and he knows that then all things will work out well. Such a faith makes for the good life, the good society. Arts can thrive and science flourish. Calamities may come but they will not crush us. The resilience of the believer in God and in his righteousness permits him to move forward gladly, with joyful effort and inner tranquillity.

The sad thing is that though this faith, if shared by all the members of society, would make society a pleasant place indeed, yet it can never be accepted merely as a means of saving society. You cannot use the great religion as a means to something less than God. It is not a human means. It is a human end. All things subordinate to it; it does not subordinate to anything. A good society is its by-product and not its proper fruit. Consequently, even though my diagnosis of the moment be right, we cannot draw the conclusion: therefore let us preach a religious return to the transcendental Lord, architect, lawmaker and judge. No man will accept religion just to save society. Marx was so wrong in so many things. He taught that society made its religion. Just the opposite is true; religion makes its society. Men submit to God not because this is useful, but because they believe in the reality of God and recognise that it is logical to submit to him, and illogical to refuse submission. This faith takes place in society but it is not a socially produced experience. It is the meeting of God and man, a fearful but wholesome experience. Society does not lead men to it, though it unwittingly offers many an occasion.

**T**HEREFORE my suggestion for the saving of our moment is not a practical one. You cannot whoop up a campaign in favor of religion in order to save the world. No one will accept religion for that motive. You can only give testimony to the truth of the universal permeation of reality with a transcendental God to whom man must submit, gladly and totally, because this is true and not for any other reason. If such testimony were to be generally received, society would save itself, but there is no way of making man receive it. The way to save our society is to go beyond society in search of the Kingdom of God and its righteousness, and then all the other things will be added unto us. If society will not do this, at least the individual can.



## BEYOND PERSONALISM

SIMONE WEIL

**“Y**OU do not interest me.” This is something a man cannot say to his neighbor without cruelty, without injustice.

“Your person does not interest me.” This may have its place in an affectionate conversation between close friends without wounding what is most delicately fragile in the friendship.

Similarly, without degrading himself, a man may say, “My person does not matter,” but never, “I do not matter.”

Here is proof that the current vocabulary of the modern thought known as personalism is erroneous. And in these matters, wherever there is a serious error in vocabulary it is difficult to avoid a serious error in thought.

What is sacred in man?

In every man there is something sacred. But it is not his person. Nor is it the human person in him. It is simply, he, this man, that is sacred.

I see someone passing in the street. He has long arms, blue eyes and a mind through which pass thoughts which are unknown to me, and perhaps are trivial.

Neither his person nor the human person in him is sacred to me. But *he* is sacred in his entirety. His arms, his eyes, his thoughts, everything. And I cannot injure any part of him without tremendous qualms of conscience.

If it were the human person in him that were sacred, I could easily gouge out his eyes. Once he were blind he would be just as much a human person as before. I would not have touched the human person in him at all. I would only have destroyed his eyes.

It is impossible to define the respect that is due a person. This is not because of the impossibility of verbal definitions, since many lucid concepts are in that category; this particular idea cannot even be conceived and consequently cannot be defined or circumscribed by any silent process of thought.

To take as a rule of public morality an idea that cannot be conceived and defined would be to make way for every kind of tyranny.

The idea of rights that spread through the world in 1789 was powerless to do the work committed to it because of its own internal inadequacy.

Combining two inadequate ideas by speaking of the rights of the human person would hardly be an improvement.

*Since her death in 1943 Simone Weil has been acclaimed as one of the greatest spiritual writers of our time. The present essay was written in London in 1942 and appeared in LA TABLE RONDE, December 1950.*

**E**XACTLY what is it that prevents me from gouging out a man's eyes, if it amuses me and I am free to do it?

Although he is sacred to me in his entirety he is not sacred to me under every aspect or from every point of view. He is not sacred to me because his arms happen to be long or his eyes blue or his thoughts trivial. Nor because he hap-

pens to be a duke, or a streetcleaner. None of these things would hold back my hand.

What would hold me back would be the knowledge that if his eyes were gouged out, his soul would be torn by the thought that someone was doing evil to him. From the earliest childhood to the grave, there is something in the depths of every human heart which, in spite of all the experience of crimes that have been committed, endured, and observed, invincibly expects people to do good and not evil. More than any other thing, this is the sacred element in every human being.

Goodness is the sole source of the sacred. Only good and those things that have some relation to goodness are sacred.

This profound but childlike part of the heart that always expects good is not what is involved when a man lays claim to his rights. The little boy who jealously watches to see if his brother has a larger piece of cake gives in to an impulse that comes from a much more superficial part of the soul. The word justice has two very different meanings corresponding to these two parts of the soul. Only the first is important.

Every time the childlike lament rises from the depths of the heart—the lament that Christ himself could not hold back, “Why do they harm me?”—there is certainly injustice. For if, as it often happens, it is merely the result of a mistake, the injustice then consists in the inadequacy of the explanation.

Those who inflict the blows that cause this cry are giving in to impulses, which vary according to the people and the situation. At times some find pleasure in this cry. Many do not know the cry has been raised. For it is a silent cry which resounds only in the secret of the heart.

These two states of mind are more alike than it may seem. The latter is simply a weak form of the first. This ignorance is complacently entertained because it is flattering and also affords pleasure. There are no limits set to our desires except by the exigencies of the material order and the existence of other human beings around us. Every imaginary extension of these limits is sensual and thus there is pleasure in anything that makes us forget the reality of obstacles. That is why great upheavals such as war and civil war, which empty human existence of reality and seem to make marionettes out of men, are so intoxicating. That is also why slavery is so agreeable to masters.

Among those who have suffered too many blows—slaves, for example—that part of the heart that cries out with surprise at seeing evil seems dead. But it is never completely dead; it is simply no longer able to cry out. It is rooted in a state of muffled and uninterrupted lament.

But even among those whose power to cry out is intact, this cry almost never succeeds in expressing itself coherently within or without. Most often the words which try to express it fall completely false.

This is all the more inevitable, for those who often have the occasion to feel that they are being injured are the ones who least know how to express it. For example, nothing is more frightening than to see some wretch in court stammering before a magistrate who is jesting cleverly in fine language.

Except for the intelligence, the only human faculty really interested in public freedom of expression is that part of the heart which cries out against evil.

But freedom amounts to very little for this faculty, since it is incapable of expressing itself. First of all there must be public education to furnish this faculty with some means of expression. There must be a rule for the public expression of opinions, which would be less by liberty than by an atmosphere of silence and attention in which this feeble and awkward cry could make itself heard. Finally, there must be a system of institutions which as far as possible would form for positions of leadership men who are capable and desirous of hearing and understanding this cry.

Obviously a party busied with conquest or with the preservation of its power to govern can hear in these cries only so much noise. The party will react differently depending on whether the noise hinders or helps its propaganda machine. But in no case is it capable of the delicate and prophetic vigilance that is required to discern its meaning.

The same is true to a lesser degree for organisations which contagiously imitate the parties; that is to say, when public life is dominated by the operation of party politics. This is true for all organizations including, for example, the unions and even the Churches.

Obviously parties and similar organizations are equally foreign to conscience.

When freedom of expression leads in fact to freedom of propaganda for organizations of this kind, the only parts of the human soul which deserve to express themselves are not free to do so. Or else they are free only to an infinitesimal degree, scarcely more than in a totalitarian regime.

This is also the case in a democracy, where party politics controls the balance of power. At least this is true in what we Frenchmen have up to now called democracy. We know no other kind and therefore must invent something else.

The same norm applied similarly to every political institution can lead to equally manifest conclusions.

It is not the person that furnishes the norm. When a man is harmed and the depths of his soul cry out in sorrowful astonishment, it is not something personal that is involved. An attack on the person or on his desires is not enough to bring out the cry. It always breaks out where there is the feeling of injustice coupled with suffering. With the least of men as with Christ, it always constitutes an impersonal protest.

Cries of personal protest also are frequently heard, but these are not important; you can be the cause of as many of these as you wish without violating anything sacred.

*The sacred is impersonal.*

THE sacred element, far from being the person, is rather the impersonal aspect of the human being.

Everything that is impersonal in man is sacred, and only that.

In our times, when writers and scholars have so strangely usurped the clergy's place, the public recognizes with a complacency in no way founded on reason that the artistic and scientific faculties are sacred. This is generally believed to be evident, although it is far from being so. People think they are

giving a good reason for their belief when they maintain that the use of these faculties represents one of the highest forms of fulfillment for the human person.

In fact, that is all it is. In such a situation it is easy to be aware of what it is worth and what it produces.

It produces an attitude towards life that is so common in our times and was expressed in that horrible phrase of Blake's "It is better to suffocate a child in his cradle than to keep an unsatisfied desire inside of you."\* Or an attitude such as that which gave birth to the idea of the gratuitous act. It creates a science in which every possible kind of norm, standard and value, except truth, is recognized.

Gregorian chant, romanesque churches, the *Iliad*, the invention of geometry—none of these was an occasion of human fulfillment for the people through whom they have come down to us.

Science, art, literature, philosophy, which are merely forms of human perfection, are fields in which striking and glorious successes are made by men whose names subsequently live on for thousands of years. But over and above this domain, far above it, separated from it by an abyss, is another sphere in which things of first importance are found. These are essentially anonymous.

It is pure chance whether the names of those who have made their way into this domain are remembered or forgotten. Even if they are known they have really entered into anonymity. Their person has disappeared.

Truth and beauty dwell in the realm of impersonal and anonymous things. It is this realm that is sacred. The other is not, or if it is, it is only as a stain of color would be which represented a host in a painting.

If a child adds up a column of figures and makes a mistake, the mistake carries the stamp of his person. If he proceeds in a perfectly correct manner, his person is absent from the entire operation.

Perfection is impersonal. The person is that part of us that has to do with error and sin. The mystics in all their efforts always aspired to reach the point where no longer any part of their soul would think in terms of "I." But the part of the soul that thinks in terms of "we" is infinitely more dangerous.

The impersonal is accessible in solitude. The transition to the impersonal cannot take place except by a vigilance of rare quality that is possible only in solitude—not only actual but moral solitude. The impersonal is never reached by the person who thinks of himself as a member of a collectivity, as a part of a "we."

Men in collectivity do not have access to the impersonal, even in its inferior forms. A group of human beings cannot even add up a column of figures. The process of addition takes place in a mind which is momentarily oblivious of the fact that any mind exists.

The personal is opposed to the impersonal, but there can be a transition from one to the other. There is no transition from the collective to the impersonal. A collectivity must first of all be reduced to separate persons in order to make the transition to the impersonal possible.

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\* E. M. W. Tillyard, *Poetry; Direct and Oblique*, pp. 9-12, makes much the same point. (Tr.)



In this sense only, the person participates far more in things sacred than does the collectivity.

Not only is the collective alien to sacred things, but it goes astray by producing false imitations of them.

*The collective and fiction.*

THE error which attributes a sacred character to the collective is idolatry. At all times, in every place, this is the most widespread crime. And the person in whose eyes personal perfection is the only thing of importance has completely lost the meaning of sacred. It is difficult to say which of the two errors is the worse. Often they are found together in the same mind in varying proportions. But the latter error has much less vitality and lasts a shorter time than the first.

From the spiritual point of view the struggle between Germany and France in 1940 was principally a struggle not between barbarism and civilization or between good and evil, but between the first error and the second. The victory of the former was not surprising; the first is of itself the stronger.

The subordination of the person to the collective is not a scandal; it is a fact of the mechanical order comparable to the relation of the gram to the kilogram on a scale. The person is in fact always subject to the collective, up to and including the point which we call human perfection.

For example, the artists and writers are precisely the ones most inclined to look on their art as the ultimate in human perfection and they are in fact most subservient to public taste. Hugo had no difficulty reconciling the cult of self with the role of the *echo sonore*. Examples like Wilde, Gide or the surrealists are still more obvious. The scholars on the same level are also subservient to current style which has more influence over science than over the shape of hats. The collective opinion of specialists is almost sovereign for each of them.

The human person, being in fact and by nature subservient to the collective, has no natural rights of its own.

It is correct to say that antiquity had no idea of the respect due to the person. They thought much too clearly for such a confused concept.

The human being escapes the collective only by raising himself above the personal level and thus reaching the impersonal. At this moment there is something in him, a part of his soul, in which nothing collective can hold sway. If he can be rooted in impersonal values, that is, if he is capable of drawing strength from them, he is then in a position to place a tiny but real force against any kind of collectivity. And this he can do whenever he feels the obligation, without relying on any other collectivity.

There are occasions when an almost infinitesimal force is decisive. A collectivity is much stronger than a single person, but every collectivity needs certain operations in order to exist (adding up a column of figures is the elementary example), and these are operations that can be performed only by a mind in the state of solitude. This need opens up the possibility of the collective giving way to the impersonal if we could only devise a way to take advantage of it.

Each one of those who has passed into the realm of the impersonal encounters a certain responsibility towards every human being—a responsibility to protect not his person, but every fragile possibility the person has of passing into the realm of the impersonal.

It is to these people first of all that an appeal must be made to respect the sacred element in human beings. For in order that such an appeal exist, it must indeed be addressed to people capable of understanding it.

It is useless to explain to a collectivity that in each of the units which comprise it there is something that must not be violated. First of all a collectivity is not a person, except by a logical fiction; it has no existence, except abstractly. To speak to it is a fictitious act. And if it were a person, it would be disposed to respect only itself.

Moreover, the greatest danger is not the tendency of the collective to suppress the person, but the tendency of the person to throw itself into the collective and disappear. Or perhaps the first danger is only an apparent and deceptive aspect of the second.

If it is useless to tell society that the person is sacred, it is also useless to tell the person that he is sacred. He will not believe it. He does not feel that he is sacred. He is prevented from feeling sacred because in fact he is not.

There may be people whose consciences seem to indicate otherwise, whose person offers a certain awareness of being sacred which they try to generalize and attribute to everyone. Such people are victims of a double illusion.

The feeling of sacredness which they experience is not authentic; it is rather a false imitation which the collective produces. If occasionally they experience it as pertaining to their own person, it is because their person partakes of the collective prestige through the social faculty that is lodged in them.

Thus it is erroneous to think that they can generalize. Although this erroneous generalization is the result of a generous impulse, it cannot have strength enough to create the attitude that anonymous human matter ceases really to be anonymous human matter. But it is difficult for them to realize this, for they have no contact with humanity.

In man, the person is a thing in distress. It is cold and it runs about seeking refuge and warmth.

This is ignored by those whose person is eagerly entangled in social consideration, be it only in expectation.

That is why a personalist philosophy was born and has spread not into the popular milieux but among the writers who by profession possess or hope to acquire a name and reputation.

The relationship between society and the person must be established with the sole aim of putting aside whatever might prevent the growth and mysterious flowering of the impersonal part of the soul.

For this each person must have on the one hand a little space, some free time, the possibility for the transition to higher and higher degrees of vigilance, and for solitude and silence. At the same time he must be warm, so that misery may not compel him to drown himself in the collective.

If these values are correct, it would seem difficult to proceed further in the direction of evil than modern society, even democratic society, has gone. More particularly, a modern factory is not very far from reaching the limits of horror.

In it every human being is constantly harassed, goaded by another's will, and at the same time the soul is cold, distressed and abandoned. A man ought to have warm silence; he is given icy tumult.

Although physical work is hard, it is not degrading. It is not an art; it is not a science, but it has a value absolutely equal to that of art and science. For it furnishes an equally great possibility of reaching the impersonal form of vigilance.

To gouge out young Watteau's eyes and make him turn a millstone is no greater crime than putting a little boy of artistic talent on the assembly line or on a hand-machine on a piece-work basis. The difference is hardly noticeable.

To exactly the same degree as in art and science, though in a different manner, physical work is a certain contact with the reality, truth, and beauty of this universe and with the eternal wisdom which constitutes its order.

(That is why to disparage work is a sacrilege in exactly the same sense as to trample the Sacred Host under foot.)

If the working man realized this, if he felt that because he is the victim of his work he is in a sense its accomplice, his resistance would take on quite a different force from that which the idea of his person and his rights could furnish him. It would not be a claim; it would be a revolt of his entire being, grim and desperate, as in the case of a young girl who is put by force into a house of prostitution; and at the same time it would be a cry of hope from the depths of the heart.

This feeling dwells within him, but it is so inarticulate that it is imperceptible even to himself. And masters of the written word are quite incapable of expressing it for him.

When we speak to him of his own fate, we generally choose to talk to him about wages. Overwhelmed with the fatigue that makes every attempt at vigilance an affliction, he welcomes with relief the facile simplicity of figures.

Thus he forgets that the object of bargaining (in which he complains that he is forced to produce at a reduction and is refused a just price) is his very soul.

Imagine the devil in the process of buying an unfortunate person's soul. Someone takes pity on the victim, intervenes in the debate and says to the devil: It is shameful to offer such a small price; the thing is worth twice as much.

This sinister farce is the role the worker movement is playing, with its unions, parties and leftist intellectuals.

This spirit by bargaining was already implicit in the idea of rights which the people of 1789 were imprudent enough to place at the heart of the appeal they shouted over the face of the earth. They destroyed its virtue in advance.

*The idea of rights is specious.*

THE idea of rights is bound up with that of distribution, exchange and quantity. There is something commercial about it. It is the kind of thing that results in lawsuits. Rights are established only on the basis of a claim and when this basis is adopted it means that force is not far off but just behind it, supporting it as it were. Otherwise the claim is ridiculous.

There are a great number of ideas always found in the same category, which in and of themselves are wholly foreign to the supernatural but nevertheless are slightly above brute force. They are entirely relative to the morality of the collective animal, to use Plato's language, when the animal keeps a few traces of training effected by the supernatural workings of grace. When these ideas are not constantly revived by a renewal of grace, when they are merely vestigial, they are necessarily subject to the whims of the beast.

The ideas of rights, person, democracy are in this category. Bernanos had the courage to observe that democracy offers no protection against dictators. The person is by nature submitted to the collective. Rights naturally depend on force. The lies and errors which hide these truths are extremely dangerous, because they hinder any recourse to what alone is removed from force and protects us from it—that is to say another force, which is the radiance of the spirit.

Heavy substances can resist the pull of gravity only in plants where the sun's energy is captured by the green leaves and is allowed to operate in the sap. Gravity and death gradually but inexorably overtake a plant deprived of light.

Among these lies is that of natural rights put forth in the materialistic eighteenth century. Not by Rousseau, who had a lucid and powerful mind and one of truly Christian inspiration, but by Diderot and the circles of the *Encyclopedia*.

The idea of rights comes to us from Rome, and as everything that comes from ancient Rome—the woman pregnant with the blasphemous names of the Apocalypse—it is pagan and not baptizable. The Romans, who like Hitler had understood that force is not wholly effective unless clothed with ideas, used the idea of rights for this purpose. This idea does not lend itself very well to such a use. Modern Germany is accused of scorning the idea, but she made use of it to the full in her claim as a nation of workers. She recognized, it is true, in those whom she subjugated, no right except to obey. This was also the case in ancient Rome. To praise ancient Rome for having bequeathed us the idea of rights is singularly scandalous. For if you would examine this idea of hers at its origin, in order to determine its species, you would see that property was defined as the right to use and abuse. And in fact the majority of things which every owner had the right to use and abuse were human beings.

The Greeks did not have the concept of rights. They had no word to express it. They were satisfied with the term justice.

Unwritten laws are not the same as natural rights.

It is through a singular confusion that the unwritten law of Antigone could have been compared to natural rights. In the eyes of Creon, there was absolutely nothing natural in what Antigone did. He considered her mad.

And those of us who now think, speak and act exactly like he did certainly cannot condemn him. This can be verified by examining the text.

Antigone says to Creon: "That order did not come from God. Justice, that dwells with the gods below, knows no such law." (Sophocles, *The Theban Plays*, tr. by E. V. Rieu, Penguin Classics) Creon tries to convince her that his orders were just; he accuses her of having insulted one of her brothers by honoring the other, since in this way the same honor was given to the impious as to the faithful, to the one who died trying to destroy his fatherland as to the one who died defending it.



She says, "Nevertheless the other world demands equal laws." He objects with good reason: "But there is no equal sharing between hero and traitor." She finds this answer absurd: "Who knows what is legitimate or not in the other world?" Creon's observation is perfectly reasonable: "But an enemy, even after he is dead, is never a friend." And the little simpleton answers: "I was born for love, not hatred."

Then Creon, becoming more and more reasonable: "Well, go to the other world and since you must love, love those that are there."

That was indeed her true place. For the unwritten law which this little girl obeyed—far from having anything in common with rights or anything natural—was simply the extreme love which drove Christ to the cross.

Justice is a companion of the divinities of the other world and prescribes this excessive love. No right prescribes it. Rights have no direct connection with love.

Since the idea of rights is foreign to the Greek mind, it is also foreign to Christian inspiration, wherever it is still pure and not mixed with the Roman or Hebraic or Aristotelian heritage. One cannot imagine Saint Francis of Assisi speaking of rights.

If you say to someone capable of understanding, "What you are doing to me is not just," you may reach and awaken at its source the spirit of vigilance and love. Such is not the case with words such as "I have the right to . . .", "You have no right to . . ."; they contain a latent conflict and arouse a belligerent mentality. The idea of rights is at the very center of social conflict and makes every nuance of charity impossible.

When an almost exclusive use is made of it, it is impossible to keep one's mind on the real problem. A peasant in a market on whom a buyer indiscreetly puts pressure in order to buy his eggs at a moderate price, may very well reply: "I have the right to keep my eggs if I am not offered an adequate price." But a young girl who is being put by force into a house of prostitution will never speak of her rights. In such a situation this word would seem ridiculously inadequate.

That is why the social drama which is analogous to the second situation falsely appears, through the use of this word, similar to the first.

The use of this word has transformed what should have been a cry from the depths of the soul into a bitter clamor of claims that have neither purity nor efficacy.

The idea of rights, from the very fact of its mediocrity, naturally involves the idea of the person, for rights are related to personal things. They are found on this level.

By adding the term "person" to the term "rights" (which implies the right of the person to what we call his fulfillment) we commit an even greater evil. The cry of the oppressed would descend even lower than the tone of the claim; it would take on a tone of envy.

**T**HE idea of person is suspect.

The person realizes his fulfillment only under the pressure of social prestige; human perfection is a social privilege. One does not say this to the masses when

speaking of their personal rights; they are told the opposite. And they do not have sufficient analytic power at their disposal to see it clearly by themselves; but they feel it is true; and their daily experience makes them certain of it.

For them even certainty cannot be a motive for rejecting this watchword. In these times of confused thinking it is not hard to demand an equal share of privileges for all, i.e., the things that are essentially privileges. This claim is both absurd and base; absurd because privileges are by definition inequitable; base because they are not worth being desired.

But it is a privileged class of people who formulate claims and the things that have a monopoly on language. They are not ones to deny that privileges are worth wanting. They do not think so. But in any case it would be unbecoming on their part.

For similar reasons many indispensable truths which could save men are never uttered; those who might be able to say them cannot formulate them, and those who could formulate them are unable to say them. Finding a remedy for this difficulty should be one of the most pressing problems of true politics.

In an unstable society the privileged class has a bad conscience. Some hide it with an air of defiance and say to the people: "It is wholly fit that you do not have privileges and that I do. "Other say to them in a benevolent tone, "I claim for all of you an equal share in the privileges I possess."

The first attitude is odious. The second is lacking in common sense, and it is too easy.

Both of them goad the people into choosing the path of evil, into deviating from their unique true good which is not in their hands but which, in a sense, is so near to them. The people are much nearer to authentic values, sources of beauty, truth and joy and fullness of being than those who pity them. But not being in possession of these goods and not knowing how to reach them, life goes on as if they were infinitely far away. Those who speak for them and to them are equally incapable of understanding what great distress they are in and what fullness of being is almost within their reach. And it is indispensable that they be understood.

Misfortune is of itself inarticulate. The afflicted silently beg to be given words with which to express themselves. There are times when they are not heard. There are other times when they are given words, but the words are poorly chosen, for those who choose them are ignorant of the affliction they try to interpret.

Usually they are far from misery, because circumstances have placed them elsewhere. But even if they are rather near, or if they have experienced adversity in a recent period of their life, they are nevertheless strangers to it, for they became strangers to it as soon as they were able.

Affliction is as repugnant to thought as death is to life. The voluntary offering of a serf who advances step by step to place himself in the teeth of a wolf is just about as possible as concentration directed toward a real and proximate misfortune on the part of a person who is able to avoid it.

Whatever is indispensable to good and impossible by nature is always possible supernaturally.

*Supernatural good.*

**S**UPERNATURAL good is not a kind of supplement to natural good, as some Aristotelians would like to convince us for our greater comfort. It would be pleasant if it were so, but it is not. In every poignant problem of human existence, there is a choice only between evil and supernatural good.

If words pertaining to the lower level of values—democracy, rights, person—are placed on the tongue of those who live in affliction, it would be a gift likely to lead them to no good and would inevitably cause them a great deal of harm.

These ideas have no place in heaven. They are suspended in mid-air, and for that very reason they can have no influence on earth.

Only the sunlight falling constantly from the sky can furnish a tree with the energy necessary to thrust its powerful roots deeply into the ground.

Only the things that come from heaven are capable of making a real imprint on earth.

If we wish efficaciously to fortify the afflicted, we must put on their lips only the words whose proper dwelling place is heaven, in the other world. We must not feel that this is impossible. Affliction disposes the soul to accept greedily, to drink in all that comes from above. It is not the consumers that are lacking for this kind of product but the producers.

The rule for choosing words is easy to recognize and to use. The afflicted who are submerged in evil aspire to good. They must not be given words that merely express good, but good in a pure state. The distinction is easy. If something designating evil can be added to a word it is foreign to pure good. It is a reproach to say: "He is pushing himself ahead." The self is then foreign to good. We can also speak of abusing democracy. Democracy is then foreign to good. The possession of a right implies the possibility of making a good or bad use of it. Therefore, rights are foreign to good. On the other hand the fulfilling of an obligation is always a good, everywhere. Truth, beauty, justice and compassion are goods, at every time and place.

In order to be sure one is saying what must be said when talking about the aspirations of the afflicted, it suffices to confine oneself to words and expressions which at all times and in every place and circumstance express only good.

As far as words are concerned, this is one of the two favors we can do for the afflicted. The other is to find words expressing the truth of their misery, so that when they silently cry out, "Why do they harm me?" they may be heard in any circumstances.

For this they must not rely on men of talent, on personalities or celebrities, nor even on men of genius in the sense in which the word is ordinarily used (confused with the word talent). They can count only on a genius of the very first order, the poet of the *Iliad*, Aeschylus, Sophocles, the Shakespeare of *Lear*, the Racine of *Phèdre*. There are very few.

But there are many human beings, either poorly or indifferently endowed by nature, who appear greatly inferior not only to Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles,

Shakespeare, Racine, but also to Virgil, Corneille, and Hugo; and they nevertheless live in the realm of impersonal values which the others have not reached.

The town idiot, literally speaking, who really loves truth, even though he can express nothing without stammering, is in a realm of thought far superior to Aristotle. He is infinitely nearer to Plato than Aristotle ever was. He has genius, whereas in the case of Aristotle only the word talent applies. If a fairy came to the idiot and offered to change his fate to something comparable to Aristotle's, his wisdom would urge him to refuse unhesitatingly. But he would not know anything about it. No one tells him. Everyone would say the opposite. He must be told. We must encourage idiots, people without talent and those of average or scarcely better than average talent: people who have genius. One need not fear making them proud. The love of truth is always accompanied by humility. Real genius is simply the supernatural virtue of humility in the realm of thought.

Instead of encouraging the flowering of talents, as was proposed in 1789, one must cherish and rekindle the growth of genius with sensitive respect; for only heroes who are truly pure, saints and geniuses, can be a succor to the afflicted. Between the two, men of talent, intelligence, energy, character, strong personality, form a barrier and prevent the assistance from being given. No harm must be done to this barrier, but we must put it gently aside and try to conceal it as much as possible. The much more dangerous barrier of the collective must be broken by suppressing every part of our institutions and customs in which any form of partisan spirit resides. Neither personalities nor parties ever lend their ears to truth or affliction.

*Alliance of truth and affliction.*

THERE is a natural alliance between truth and misfortune, because both are mute supplicants, forever condemned to remain voiceless in our presence.

A vagabond brought to trial for having stolen a carrot in a field stands before a comfortably seated judge who cleverly asks questions and makes comments and jokes, while the vagabond cannot even stutter out the answers. This is what happens when truth stands before an intellect setting forth its opinions.

It is always language that formulates opinions, even for men who are apparently silent. The natural faculty we call intelligence is related to opinions and language. Language expresses relationships. But it really expresses very few, because words are spoken in temporal sequence. If words are confused, vague, imprecise, disorderly, if the mind that expresses or hears them has little ability to keep a thought present to the mind, then language is empty or almost empty of every real content of relationships. If words are perfectly clear, precise and ordered; if they are addressed to an able mind which conceives the thought and keeps it present until another is conceived and keeps these two present while a third is conceived; and so on—if this is the case, language can be relatively rich in expressing relationships. As always, however, this relative richness is an unfortunate atrocity when compared to the perfection which alone is desirable.



*The prison of language.*

**E**VEN at best, a mind bound by language is in a prison. Its limit is the number of relationships which words can simultaneously render present to the mind. It remains ignorant of thoughts involving a combination of a greater number of relationships. Although such thoughts are perfectly clear and although each of the relationships making them up can be expressed in perfectly precise words, they are beyond the power of language and cannot be formulated. Thus the mind moves about in an enclosed space of partial truth, a space more or less large, and it is never able to catch a glimpse of what remains on the outside.

If a captive mind is unaware of its own captivity, it dwells in error. If it recognizes the fact, if only for a tenth of a second, and then forgets it in order to avoid suffering, it dwells in untruth. Men of extremely great intelligence can be born, can live and die, in error and untruth. In them intelligence is not a value or even an advantage. The difference between men who are more or less intelligent may be compared to criminals condemned to life imprisonment in cells of various sizes. A man who is intelligent and proud of his intelligence is like the convict who is proud of living in a large cell.

A mind that realizes its captivity prefers to conceal it. But it will not do so if it has a horror for untruth. Then it must suffer very much. It will knock itself against the wall to the point of fainting; it will regain consciousness and look fearfully around. Then one day it will start all over again and faint, and so on, endlessly, without hope. But one day it will wake up on the other side of the wall.

He may still be a captive, but in a more spacious prison. What does it matter? Henceforth he holds the key—the secret that tears down every barrier. He is beyond what men call intelligence; he is where wisdom begins.

A mind imprisoned by language can only give opinions. A mind already dwells in truth when it has become capable of grasping ideas that are inexpressible because of the great number of relationships that go to make them up—ideas that are more precise and more lucid than the most accurate language can express. Certitude and unobscure faith belong to it. It matters little if first it had great or little intelligence, a small or large cell. Here is what alone matters. Having arrived at the limits of its own intelligence, whatever it may have been, it may now pass beyond. A village idiot is as near to the truth as a child prodigy.

Both are separated from truth only by a wall. They cannot attain the truth without having passed through their own annihilation; without having spent a long time in a state of extreme and total humiliation.

The same obstacle prevents us from being aware of affliction. As truth is different from opinion, so is affliction different from suffering. Affliction is a mechanism that crushes the soul. The man who is caught in it is like a worker caught in the gears of a machine. He is torn and covered with blood.

The degrees and nature of the suffering which constitutes affliction in the proper sense of the word differs greatly, depending on the people involved. It depends especially on the amount of vital energy the person had at the beginning, and the attitude he adopts in his suffering.

Human thought cannot know the reality of affliction. If someone recognizes it he must say to himself: "A combination of circumstances which I cannot control may remove anything from me at any time, including those things which are so definitely mine that I consider them as part of myself. There is nothing of me that I cannot lose. Chance may at any time do away with what I am and put something vile and contemptible in its place.

To realize this with one's whole soul is to experience nothingness. It is a state of extreme and total humiliation which is also the condition necessary to reach the truth. It means the death of the soul. That is why the contact with affliction causes the soul to draw back in the same way that the flesh withdraws from impending death.

We think of the dead with pity when they come to mind or when we see their tombs or when we see them neatly laid out on stretchers. But the sight of certain cadavers that are thrown, as it were, on a battlefield, has an aspect that is both sinister and grotesque and gives us horror. Death then appears nude and unclothed; and the flesh shudders.

The afflicted are not heard.

When physical or moral distance enables us to see affliction only in a vague and confused way, without being able to distinguish it from a simple suffering, a tender pity is inspired in generous souls. But when any combination of circumstances enables us suddenly, somewhere, to see it bare as something destructive—as in a maimed person or a leper—we shudder and draw back. And the afflicted themselves also shudder with horror when they see their own misery.

To listen to someone is to put yourself in his place while he speaks. In order to put yourself in the place of a person whose soul is maimed by affliction or is in imminent danger of it, you would have to annihilate your own soul. This would be more difficult than suicide for a child who is glad to be living. And so people in misery are not heard. They are in the same situation as the person who cuts off his tongue and from time to time forgets his infirmity. His lips move but no sound reaches the ear. He rapidly becomes incapable of speech because of the certainty of not being heard.

That is why there is no hope for the vagabond standing before the magistrate. If something heart-rending comes out of his stuttering, it will be heard by neither the judge nor the spectators. It is a mute cry. And the afflicted nearly always are equally deaf to one another. Every one of them is urged on by a general indifference and tries to remain deaf to himself by resorting to untruth or unconsciousness.

Only the supernatural operation of grace permits a soul to pass through its own annihilation to the point where it acquires that kind of contemplation which alone permits one to be attentive to truth and affliction. The same applies to both. It is an intense contemplation—pure, immobile, gratuitous and generous. And this contemplation is love. Because misery and truth require the same vigilance if they are to be understood, the spirit of justice and the spirit of truth are the same. The spirit of justice and truth is merely a kind of contemplation, which is pure love.

In the eternal designs of Providence anything a man does in any field in the spirit of justice and truth is clothed with the splendor of beauty.

Beauty is a supreme mystery here below. It is a splendor which demands attention, but gives it no impulse to endure. Beauty always promises but never gives; it arouses hunger but it has no nourishment for the part of the soul which tries to be sated here below. It gives nourishment only to the cognitive part of the soul. It creates desires and makes it clearly felt that there is nothing in it to be desired, for we insist above all that no part of it change. If we seek no means of getting out of the delightful torment it inflicts, the desire is gradually changed into love and then there is formed the germ of gratuitous and pure contemplation.

As long as affliction is hideous, its true expression is sovereignly beautiful. One can give examples even from recent centuries—*Phèdre*, *L'Ecole des Femmes*, *Lear*, the poems of Villon—but better still the tragedies of Aeschylus and Sophocles; and better still the *Iliad*, the Book of Job and certain popular poems; and better still the accounts of the Passion and the Gospels. The splendor of beauty is spread over affliction by the light of the spirit of justice and love, and these alone permit human thought to see and reproduce affliction as it is.

Moreover, every time a fragment of inexpressible truth is put into words that are unable to contain the truth that inspires them, but correspond with it so perfectly by their arrangement that they furnish a foundation for every mind wanting to perceive the connection—every time this is true a dash of beauty is shed over the words.

Everything that proceeds from pure love is enlightened by the splendor of beauty.

Although in a very confused way and mixed with many false imitations, beauty is sensitive to the interior of the cell in which every human thought is first imprisoned. If truth and justice have their tongues cut off, they cannot hope for any help but their own. Nor does beauty have a language, it does not speak, it says nothing. But it has a voice to call out with. It speaks and points to justice and truth which are voiceless. It is like a dog barking to make people come to his master who is lying unconscious in the snow.

Justice, truth and beauty are allies. With three such beautiful words there is no need to look for any others.

#### *The two cries.*

**J**USTICE consists in seeing that no harm is done to men. Evil is done to a human being when he cries out interiorly: "Why do people harm me?" He is often mistaken as soon as he attempts to find out what harm he is suffering, who causes it and why they inflict it on him. But the cry is infallible.

The other cry so often heard, "Why does so and so have more than I?" has to do with rights. One must learn how to distinguish between the two and silence the second as often as possible with the least possible brutality. This is done by relying on the law, the ordinary tribunals and the police. The law school suffices to form minds capable of solving the problems in this domain.

But the cry, "Why do people harm me?" raises quite different problems for which the spirit of truth, justice and love is indispensable.

Every human soul has the constant hope that no evil will be inflicted on it. The text of the Lord's Prayer asks this of God. But God has no power to prevent evil unless the eternal part of the soul enters into real and direct contact with Him. The rest of the soul—indeed, the entire soul of the person who has not received the grace of real and direct contact with God—is abandoned to the will of men and to chance and circumstances.

Thus we must see to it that no harm is done to our fellow men.

When evil is done to a man, it enters his very being,—not only the sorrow and the suffering but even the horror of evil. As men have the power to communicate good to one another they also have the power of communicating evil. One can communicate evil to a human being by flattering him or by providing him with comfort or pleasures, but most often men communicate evil by doing evil.

Eternal Wisdom however does not leave the human soul entirely to the mercy of chance or the will of men. An injury inflicted on a human being from the outside intensifies the desire for good and thus automatically arouses the possibility of a remedy. When the wound is deep the desired good is the perfectly pure good. The part of the soul that asks "why do they harm me?" is that profound part in every human being, even the most soiled, which from the earliest childhood has remained perfectly intact and innocent.

To preserve justice, to protect men from every evil, means first of all to prevent them from being harmed. For those to whom evil is done, it means erasing its material consequences and putting the victims in a situation where the wound that has not pierced too deeply may be naturally healed in comfort. But for those whose entire soul has been wounded we must above all satisfy their hunger by giving them a perfectly pure good to feed on.

There can be no obligation to inflict evil in order to arouse and satisfy this hunger. That is what punishment consists of. Those who have become foreign to good to the point of trying to spread evil cannot be reinstated in good except by the imposition of some evil. It must be inflicted upon them until the perfectly innocent voice is awakened deep inside which says with astonishment: "Why do they harm me?" This innocent part of the criminal's soul must receive nourishment and grow until it sets itself up as a tribunal in the interior of the soul and judges the crimes that were committed, condemns them, and finally with the help of grace pardons them. The object of punishment is then achieved; the criminal is reinstated in good and may be publicly and solemnly reintegrated in the city.

Chastisement is merely that. Even capital punishment must not be anything else although it excludes the reintegration into the city in the literal sense. Chastisement is uniquely a process of providing pure good to men who do not want it. The art of punishment is the art of arousing in criminals the desire for pure good through suffering or even through death.

*The idea of chastisement is lost.*

**B**UT we have entirely lost the basic idea of chastisement. We no longer know that it consists in furnishing good. For us it stops at the imposition of



evil. That is why there is one thing and only one thing in modern society even more hideous than crime and that is repressive justice. To make the idea of repressive justice the principal motive in a war effort or a revolt is more dangerous than one can imagine. Fear must be used to lessen the criminal activity of the cowards but it is shocking to make repressive justice, such as we conceive it today in our ignorance, a hero's motive.

Every time a man of today speaks of chastisement, punishment, retribution or justice in the punitive sense, he speaks of the lowest kind of vengeance.

We make so little of the treasure of suffering and violent death which Christ took upon himself and so frequently offered for those He loved, that we throw it at the most worthless beings under our eyes, knowing that they will make no use of it and not intending to help them discover its proper use.

This is what is due men: for criminals, true chastisement; for the afflicted whose souls are gnawed to the depths by misery, an assistance that will quench their thirst at supernatural sources; for all others a little comfort, much beauty, and protection against those who would do them harm. Everywhere the tumult of untruths, propaganda and opinions must be strictly limited and a silence established in which truth may germinate and mature.

In order to assure this for mankind, one can count only on those who have gone over to the other side of a certain boundary. Indeed they are not numerous. They are probably rare but nevertheless we cannot count them for most of them are hidden. Pure good is sent to us from heaven only in imperceptible quantities, either to the individual or society. "The black mustard seed is the smallest of seeds." Prosperpine ate but a single grain of pomegranate. A pearl buried in the middle of a field is not visible. You cannot see the yeast mixed with the dough.

But just as catalysts or bacteria work in chemical reactions so in human matters the imperceptible grains of pure good operate in a decisive manner simply by their presence, providing they are placed where they are needed.

*How to place them where they are needed?*

MUCH would be accomplished if among those who have charge of showing to the public the things to be praised, admired, hoped for, sought, demanded, at least a few resolved in their hearts to scorn absolutely and without exception everything that is not pure goodness, perfection, truth, justice, love.

Even more would be accomplished if the majority of those who today still exercise a little spiritual authority felt the obligation of proposing for man's aspirations only real and perfectly pure good.

*Enlightening words.*

WHEN we speak of the power of words we always mean the power of illusion and error. But in the designs of Providence there are certain words which have in themselves the virtue of illuminating and of leading to good, providing a good use is made of them. These are the words with which an absolute, and

for us imperceptible, perfection corresponds. The virtue of illuminating and leading to higher things resides in the words themselves, in these words as such, not in any concept. For to make good use of them is above all not to make them correspond with any concept. What they express is inconceivable.

God and truth are such words. Also justice, love, goodness.

The use of such words is dangerous and an ordeal. A legitimate use of them must neither be confined to any human concept or united to ideas and actions which they directly and exclusively inspire. Otherwise everyone soon recognizes them as untruths.

Such words are difficult companions. "Right," "democracy," and "person" are more suitable words. In this respect men who take on public office even with good intentions naturally find them preferable. Public office has no other meaning but the possibility of doing good to men, and those who enter into it with good intention want to do good among their contemporaries, but they usually make the mistake of believing that they will first be able to buy it at reduced prices.

Words of the lower level, "rights," "democracy," "person," are in good usage in the realm of average institutions. The inspiration from which all institutions stem, from which they are as it were a projection, requires another language.

Like the gram and the kilogram on the scale, the subordination of the person to the collective is in the nature of things. But the scale can be such that the kilogram gives way to the gram. It suffices that one of the arms be more than a thousand times longer than the other. The law of equilibrium takes sovereign precedence over the inequality of weight. But never will the inferior weight conquer the greater without a relationship between them wherein the law of equilibrium is crystallized.

And so the person cannot be protected against the collective, and democracy thus assured, except by a crystallization of superior values in public life, values that are impersonal and have no relation with any political form.

The word "person", it is true, is often applied to God. But in the passage where Christ proposed the Father as a model of the perfection He commanded even men to attain, He adds to it not only the image of a person but especially an image in the impersonal order. "Become the sons of your Father in heaven, as He makes the sun to rise on the wicked and the good, and the rain to fall on the just and the unjust."

This impersonal and divine order of the universe gives us the images of justice, truth and beauty. Nothing inferior to these is worthy of acting as an inspiration for men willing to accept death.

Over and above the institutions intended to protect rights, persons and democratic liberties, other destinies must be found that will discern and abolish everything which in contemporary life crushes souls in injustice, untruth and deformity.

It is necessary to discover them, for they are unknown, and one cannot doubt that they are indispensable.

# NOTES on other Publications

## THE POLITICAL-CULTURAL SCENE

### 1.

*The Role of the United States.* Sincere friends of the United States have long been distressed at American leaders' seeming unawareness of the deep spiritual and philosophical implications of our country's position in the family of nations. Often there is willingness to share this country's material wealth along with a desire to impart our ideals; rarely are the roots of these ideals held up for examination. Even some of the best of American thinkers sometimes give the impression of urging the world to accept an ideal which does not transcend the realm of practical political relationships, and which they themselves do not fully understand. Little thought seems to have been given to ultimate ends, the spiritual forces at play in America's present historical position, or to the fact that the future history of mankind will be formed to a great extent by the attitude Americans take to history and their own ideals.

In this context one may appreciate the importance of Reinhold Niebuhr's new book, *The Irony of American History* (Scribner's). It is a conscientious attempt to arrive at a clear understanding of the American present through a serious and frank discussion of the historical concepts in which American ideals are grounded. Prof. Niebuhr quickly uncovers some contradictions involved in the exaltation of American individualism: "On the one hand our culture does not really value the individual as much as it pretends; on the other hand, if justice is to be maintained and our survival assured, we cannot make individual liberty as unqualifiedly the end of life as our ideology asserts." True freedom is anchored in the notion of human dignity and accompanied by a general view of life which transcends the historical moment. Individual freedom is dependent on the freedom of one's fellow-men to develop their personalities in the light of a higher reality than the political sphere. Niebuhr asks Americans to remember that men are not only creators of history but are also creatures of history. He calls for a re-appraisal of the concept of man's ability to shape history: "even the most powerful nation or alliance of nations is merely one of many forces in the historical drama".

### 2.

*The China Lobby.* THE REPORTER is to be especially commended for an outstanding example of political journalism in its two issues on this subject, starting April 15th. Presented with a minimum of emotionalism, their documentation may be of special value in this election year when dubious forces are trying to make political capital out of the failure of Chiang-Kai-Shek.

### 3.

*Communism versus the Negro.* This is the title of a case study by William Nolan of the Institute of Social Order. Although well-documented, it adds little new material and does not in any way replace Wilson Records' *The Negro and*

*the Communist Party* (North Carolina). Nolan finds less than 1% of the Negro population seriously affected by Communism; the overwhelming majority want desperately to be good Americans. Although perhaps outside the strict limit of the work, the book would have been less disappointing if an introductory or concluding chapter indicated assumed value-judgments, perhaps raising the question whether current pressures on the Negro towards conformism are not in fact dissipating much of the energy needed to effect positive group action.

## 4.

*Also noted.* The January REVIEW OF POLITICS contained an able analysis of the 1951 French elections (by Ferdinand A. Hermens), as well as Waldemar Gurian's "Totalitarian religion". The editors of SOCIAL ORDER (297 4th Ave., N. Y. C.) are to be commended for their recent series of issues on the problems of the Christian community, discussing the attitude of the Christian to local and world politics, journalism, race-relations, etc. The writing is unpretentious, and the reading suggestions are exploratory. The Spring CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIETY included Kenneth Underwood's "Problems Protestantism faces in contemporary society", and William Miller's "A theologically biased view of Protestant politics" appeared in the Winter RELIGION IN LIFE.

The December and January issues of LA VIE INTELLECTUELLE contained an article by L. Hamon which argues the thesis that in the present political climate a limited nationalism should no longer be considered suspect; in fact, a due sense of national independence may be a contribution to the peace of the world. It is with this underlying theme that he analyzes the recent history of India, the Arab states, Palestine, Yugoslavia, and Great Britain; a useful documentation of relevant statements by national leaders, etc. was included with the second part of the article.

Reports on the situation of Polish Catholicism were carried in the January ESPRIT (by A. P. Lentin) and the March LA VIE INTELLECTUELLE; the latter issue also contained an able documentation on the background of social action in Canada.

## 5.

*The Rise of Modern Communism* (Holt). This book is a very brief sketch of the establishment and growth of the Communist movement in the 20th century. Its merit lies in the presentation of a kind of historical frame-work, but its analysis of Marxism and later communism is superficial and the setting it gives for the origin and growth of the movement is vague and inadequate. The Marxist economic critique is ignored, nor is there a serious attempt to explain the religion of dialectical materialism. The chief omission, however, is any description of economic conditions in the modern world or any hint of its spiritual vacuity. Thus communism is viewed chiefly as an anti-liberal political movement and its dynamism and successful rise is left unexplained.

## 6.

*German re-armament* . . . continues to be debated: THE FRONTIER (February) printed Helmut Gollwitzer's "Is it really necessary?", and DOCUMENTS (no. 3, 1952) gave a report on the debates in the Bundestag. Two non-Stalinist Marxists



indicated belief in the possibility of the withering of the State within the frame-work of Marxist-Leninist theory: Gilles Martinet (in *LA REVUE INTERNATIONALE*, nos. 24 and 25-6) and Milovan Djilas (in *QUESTIONS ACTUELLES DU SOCIALISME*, no. 1) . . . The first issue of the *REVUE FRANCAISE DE SCIENCE POLITIQUE* immediately stamped it as a welcome addition to the important reviews in political science; Alfred Sauvy's article, "L'information, clef de la démocratie", was particularly valuable . . . *AGE NOUVEAU* brought out a special number [(63-64-65)] on Italy, which helped to fill out a picture of various aspects of post-war life in that country for those who know only the prestige of her new films and novels . . . The October *TERRE HUMAINE* presented an implied criticism of the M.R.P.'s position in the recent debate on the French school situation (interesting since *TERRE HUMAINE* is largely an intellectual organ of the M.R.P.), and revealed sympathy with the position maintained by *ESPRIT* . . . Readers who have been stimulated by the recent articles in *CROSS CURRENTS* on Church and State and Christianity and laicity will be glad to know of the articles by D. Dubarle in *LA VIE INTELLECTUELLE* of January and February, entitled "Faut-il brûler les hérétiques?" and "Culture et laïcité" . . . The March *ESPRIT* contained an account of the life and people of Viet-Nam by Paul Mus, as well as Henri Bartoli's "Les nécessités économiques d'une politique internationale". The January issue produced M. D. Chenu's "Pour une théologie du travail".

## 7.

*Art and Literature.* Attention has been drawn in recent years to the relationship between literature and the fine arts by such works as Theodore Greene's *The Arts and the Art of Criticism*, Leo Stein's *Painting, Poetry and Prose*, and Wallace Stevens' *The Relations Between Poetry and Painting*. An important contribution to this body of thought has been added by the appearance of Helmut Hatzfeld's *Literature through Art* (Oxford). Professor Hatzfeld traces the common spiritual roots of literature and art in France from the 12th to the present century. An ingenious selection of reproductions and of literary illustrations presents perhaps the most valuable part of the provocative work, a P.M.L.A. award winner. Eugene Porret discussed "Le problème de la laideur dans l'art" in *LES CAHIERS PROTESTANTS* (March).

B. Matteucci examined Kafka and Old Testament allegory in *VITA E PENSIERO* (March).

## 8.

*20th century literature in America.* Regnery is publishing a series of books under this title, which represents a helpful attempt to assess, both in historical and critical terms, the important developments in various forms of American writing during the past half-century. So far there have appeared studies of this period in poetry (by Louise Bogan), drama (by Alan S. Downer), and the novel (by Frederick J. Hoffman); others are promised in short fiction, non-fiction, and criticism. Although the books are brief, there is not only pertinent information but a sober attempt at evaluation; Professor Hoffman's book seems the most successful so far in giving both a sense of direction and judgment that, despite the recent nature of the work being considered, manages to suggest a broad perspective.

## 9.

*Legion of Decency.* The recent announcement that the Supreme Court is hearing an appeal in the case of a film in which protests by Catholic groups played an important part may well prompt further reflection on the attitude that may be most helpful in providing a higher quality of screen entertainment. Some remarks of Freda B. Lockhart in last September's *BLACKFRIARS*, suggesting limitations in the Legion of Decency approach to the film industry through the box office, would seem to be of interest:

It has even been suggested that one reason for the inadequate American support of the International Film Review may be the Legion's view that aesthetic criticism is no part of its business. Much may be said for the Legion's deliberate self-limitation to a policy of censorship for the faithful and a liaison service with the studio to help prevent the necessity of censorship. But there is a danger that the literal list of taboos and stipulations, which is the most the Legion can hope to impose on the industry's Johnson office, may be reduced to artistic absurdity and ridicule. Often we see a film flout the intention of a Johnson code ruling for seven-eighths of its length, and in the last reel reform with wild improbability to suit a ruling that crime must not pay, or divorce provide a happy ending, or that virtue must triumph. All the audience feels is that the ending is false . . . it is a pity the Legion's strictly censorial and otherwise uncritical status should be so widely misunderstood.

The author concludes that unless the critic's professional and artistic integrity convinces, his moral integrity falls flat.

This recalls a more outspoken attack on the same point of view (by J.-L. Tallenay, in *TÉMOIGNAGE CHRÉTIEN*), (3.16.51), under the title "In the U.S., the cinema has confused propriety with morality". Tallenay rightly underlined the curious confusion of American Catholic film critics who demanded a *political* revision (it was a matter of *The Bicycle Thief*, Communism, etc.) from producers who wished their work to remain within the *moral* limits admitted by Catholics. Tallenay indicated that this mentality could not understand how any but "tricky leftists and confused liberals" would have reservations about the Code; and continued

. . . what we disagree with is the affirmation that the code is the only direct application of Christianity to the cinema . . . This practical application of Christianity consists in making up a catalogue of gestures and images that are *per se* forbidden; for the film to be moral and a favorable vote of the Legion given to it, it is enough that the producer refrain from using any of the items in the catalogue.

Who does not see the danger there is in reducing Christian action to the application of a barometer which "is applied to the different categories of words and acts which may be used dramatically"? This is moralism, not Christianity . . . There also exist laws and social regulations which prohibit public breaches of decency—but the application of these laws and regulations is business for the police, not for Christianity.

## 10.

*Also noted.* Maisie Ward has brought together a mass of anecdotes and reminiscences of Chesterton (*Return to Chesterton*, Sheed and Ward), which

fill out her previously well-received biography . . . Alfred T. Barr's excellent volume on Matisse (Museum of Modern Art) allows one to trace, both in pictures and text, the long evolution of his career.

## PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

### 1.

*Leisure, the basis of culture.* The two essays of this distinguished brief work are concerned with the meaning and importance of leisure, and the nature of philosophy. For Pieper, the philosophical act is the fruit of leisure and the very essence of culture; he attacks the totalitarian "world of work" which, denying leisure, renders wisdom inaccessible.

Pieper's definitions are crucial, but he presents his thesis with insight and brilliance, arriving, despite his different approach, at conclusions parallel to that of Dr. Abraham Heschel in his *The Sabbath: its meaning for modern man* (Farrar, Strauss & Young). The latter is a rich analysis of the Seventh Day as it illumines the pervasive centrality of time and history in Judaism. Dr. Heschel has also recently published the first of two volumes on the philosophy of religion in its relation to Judaism, *Man is not Alone* (Farrar, Straus, and Young). It is a penetrating investigation of the sense of the ineffable, described by Heschel as the irrepressible intuition of God's presence and dominion. Of this book Reinhold Niebuhr wrote: "The volume is so impressive because it is the work of a poet and mystic who has mastered the philosophical and scientific disciplines and who with consummate skill reveals the dimensions of reality apprehended by religious faith, as distinguished from all the coherences and sequences and causalities which science charts and philosophy arranges into a total rational scheme."

### 2.

*Judaism and Modern Man* (Farrar, Strauss, and Young). This book of Will Herberg's represents an effort to recapture the Biblical conception of *Heilgeschichte* in relation to the covenantal community of Israel. Herberg utilizes the significant theological insights into the theological reconciliation of Judaism and Christianity first suggested by the German-Jewish theologian Franz Rosenzweig. Both Judaism and Christianity are seen by Herberg to be covenantal communities called by God to fulfill different, nevertheless indispensable, functions in the divine redemptive process.

The second issue of the new quarterly JUDAISM (April) continues the high level that had been set in the opening number: Martin Buber discusses Henri Bergson and Simone Weil, and Paul Tillich asks (and answers affirmatively) "Is there a Judeo-Christian tradition?"

### 3.

*Freedom and History* (The Noonday Press). Richard McKeon's new work is a vigorous challenge to the encroachment of imprecise semantic distinctions into the domains of philosophy and politics. Continuing his investigation of

method and principles in philosophy, McKeon has extended the range of his inquiry to encompass the related problems of ideological conflict and political theory. His analyses of the concepts of "freedom" and "history" in the major philosophical systems provide vigorous response to any unrefined manipulation of semantic formulations. His distinctions between types of semantics and their consequent doctrines of freedom and history are worth careful study.

## 4.

*Dante as a Political Thinker.* The Oxford Press has made available the 1951 Barlow lectures on this subject by Prof. A. P. d'Entreves. They are an illuminating consideration of three fundamental concepts in Dante's thinking—Civitas, Imperium, and Ecclesia—treated in the light of both his poetical and political writings. It is a stimulating re-examination of "how the 'political animal', which was so tremendously alive in Dante, was gradually curbed and subdued by the philosopher, the mystic, and indeed the poet."

## 5.

*Satan* (Sheed and Ward). The Devil seems to be reappearing on at least the horizon of the modern consciousness. This book is formed of a group of essays, and is a translation of almost all the articles in the collection published in the Etudes Carmelitaines series under the same name. The material is uneven, but the volume makes a great variety of material on this important subject conveniently available. The more solid articles in the first part of the book, on the theology of Satan, suffer somewhat from compression, and the article treating of the Devil in primitive religions is particularly disappointing. The third section of the volume, on "Possession and diabolism", contains perhaps its best work, though much of it is not new. Because of the dearth of serious examination of the subject, the book must be considered an important contribution.

## 6.

*Walls are Crumbling* (Devin-Adair). This book of Father John M. Oesterreicher is an able examination of the religious and philosophical thought of Bergson, Husserl, Picard, Landsberg, Scheler, Reinach, and Edith Stein. In each case they are studied in terms of a climactic encounter with Christ and universal total submission to Him and His Church. The biographical details are in good taste, and the work as a whole possesses both balance and interiority.

Although Catholics should be able to read this book as living apologetics, and an invitation from the author to discover the Church anew through the eyes of seven modern Jewish philosophers, it is equally important to recognize that the title, jacket and blurb are capable of giving unintentional offense.

Despite the wisdom and sensitivity present in the writing, the problem of genuine dialogue with the modern religious Jew remains; the ecumenical sense must deepen before even an adequate vocabulary will be established.

## 7.

*Christ in the Liturgy* (Sheed and Ward). The theme of this book by the editor of the DOWNSIDE REVIEW, Dom Iltyd Trethowan, is that the liturgy com-



prises the whole Christian mystery, the story of the divine action of man's redemption, and that participation in the liturgy is participation in the fullest Christian life. The book summarizes the thought of such important European liturgists as Bouyer, Cabrol, Casel and Parsch.

## 8.

*Existentialism.* The difficult task of separating and uniting, collating and exposing the intricate theories of the existentialist philosophers has been brilliantly undertaken and executed by James Collins in his recent critical study, *The Existentialists* (Regnery). Though Collins assumes the modest aim of writing an introductory essay on the most important figures—notably Sartre, Jaspers, Marcel and Heidegger—his synoptic and objective methodology is executed so well that the result is a rather comprehensive and compact treatment of the central existentialist themes. Working within the framework of a "philosophical theism and realism" Collins succeeds in applying his critical canons unobtrusively; particularly trenchant are the observations on Sartre's "postulatory atheism" and Jaspers' "quest of transcendence". Throughout the book Collins remains faithful to his own warning: "Perhaps the greatest danger facing students of existentialism is that of giving a premature, one-sided definition of the entire movement." Supported by a useful bibliography, the work is an admirable addition to our scanty library of serious studies on its subject.

## 9.

*Dewey in Italy.* The growing interest of Italian thinkers in John Dewey may be readily seen by perusing the series of monographs which constitute the substance of the special issue devoted to Dewey by the *Rivista critica di storia della filosofia* (Oct.-Dec. 1951). The group of contributors is composed of representatives of different philosophical orientations: N. Abbagnano, outstanding Italian existentialist, speaks of Dewey's philosophy as essentially flexible and problematic; A. Banfi, outspoken Italian Marxist, criticises Dewey's insistence on "the abstract nature of man" rather than vindicating "concrete historical men"; M. Dal Pra, editor of the Review, argues that Dewey's anti-metaphysical polemic, based on his rejection of metaphysics as an unwarranted way of philosophizing, itself rests on a metaphysical foundation which is not, after all, as critical as he would have us believe. "We can discover here and there in the text of the American philosopher a kind of dogmatic exaltation of the scientific method viewed as the principle which is *to construct and reveal the nature of logical forms*". On the whole, Dewey's social philosophy is favorably received. The most telling criticisms of Dewey's 'liberalism' centers on Dewey's failure to meet the tragic challenge of our age because he remained constricted by the anachronistic attitudes of 19th century liberalism, evolutionary optimism and meliorism, and a residue of the *cultiver votre jardin* variety of individualism. An historical study of the origins of Dewey's thought written by Brancatisano and a comprehensive bibliography conclude this useful and important symposium.

## 10.

*Christianity and sociology.* A series of suggestive comments on "the role of the relative in Christianity and the possibility of the absolute in sociology"

are offered by the Anglican sociologist-theologian J. V. Langmead Casserley in *Morals and Man in the Social Sciences* (Longmans). Casserley argues for a dialogue between Christianity and sociology and urges us to reconsider the indispensable role of theology in the construction of a philosophy of culture: "The history of Western thought and civilization can make no greater mistake than that of supposing that theological thinking is simply concerned with what we may call theological things and experiences, and has had no influence upon or repercussions in other spheres of intellectual interest and inquiry. Whether we like it or not, the foundations of our thought and civilization are theological, and the historian of Western ideas and the sociological analyst of Western culture can make little headway unless he is equipped with a knowledge and understanding of theology." Casserley's vision is truly total; responsive to modern man's sociological exigencies he pleads for a fresh assimilation of those truths which, only because expressed outside of a Christian framework, are too readily discarded by the fearful verdict of anathema.

## 11.

*Thomism.* Henry V. Jaffa's study of Aquinas' commentary on the Nichomachean ethics (*Thomism and Aristotelianism*, Chicago) is marked by an unfilled declaration of intention. The introductory references to the urgent need of studying moral and social problems with a view to discovering true values remain suspended somewhere outside the text. The author's logic is impeccable but his interpretation of St. Thomas' text is not always accurate. The conclusion: although the most exact and exacting commentator of Aristotle, "Thomas' assumption as to the harmony of natural and revealed doctrine, at least as far as Aristotle is to be considered representative of the former, is entirely unwarranted." William Bryar's *St. Thomas and the Existence of God* (Regnery) succeeds in showing that St. Thomas' arguments for the existence of God are logically valid; they can withstand, among other texts, the challenge of Prof. Carnap's logical and linguistic discoveries.

## 12.

*Also noted.* Education in Russia is the problem D. Morando discusses in the Oct.-Dec. 1951 issue of the REVISTA ROSMINIANA. The author shows how the historical transformation of the early experiments in free education to the present pedagogical and political monism has arrested the progression of the original movement by pressing it into the rigid mould of dogma and system.

"Buddhism comes East" is the title of a balanced review-article by Victor White (BLACKFRIARS, Dec. 1951) of recent books on Buddhism: Christmas Humphrey's introductory study for Penguin Books, F. Harold Smith's *The Buddhist Way of Life* (Hutchinson Univ. Library), Edward Conze's *Buddhism, its essence and development* (Faber), and Henri de Lubac's *Aspects du Bouddhisme* (Seuil).

Geddes Macgregor's "The sceptical implications of religious belief" (HIBBERT JOURNAL, April 1952) is a good brief statement of the theme of his book on *Christian Doubt*. E. L. Mascall comments on recent Anglo-Catholic and Roman Catholic studies of the Eucharist (CHURCH QUARTERLY REVIEW, Jan.-Mar. 1952). Renee Haynes's "A vernacular faith" (BLACKFRIARS, October 1951) studies the problem of how to see that culture does not smother faith with respectability

and 'good taste', nor color it so deeply as to make people incapable of distinguishing between the traditional pattern and the spiritual impulses themselves.

Gilbert Le Bras' "Structure et vie d'une société religieuse" (REVUE D'HISTOIRE ET DE PHILOSOPHIE RELIGIEUSE, no. 4, 1951) is an able *apologia* for the work of religious sociology. Josef Goldbrunner's *Individuation: Die Tiefenpsychologie von C. G. Jung* may be considered a Catholic equivalent to Hans Schaer's book on Jung. Georg Siegmund's *Der Traum*, although uneven, is a comprehensive book on dreams. The well-known Franciscan psychologist Father Agostino Gemelli gave an able brief statement of his long-standing reserves in regard to psychoanalysis in VITA E PENSIERO, May 1950. The January issue of ETHICS contained Richard McKeon's "Philosophy and action" and Charles R. Nixon's "Vital issues in free speech". The March CATHOLIC MIND reprinted C. Vollert's lecture to Catholic theologians on the evolution of the human body. LA BULLETIN DES MISSIONS (nos. 3-4, 1951) contained an article on "L'action, fondement de la philosophie de Mao Tse-Tung", and an essay by H. Heras on religious problems in modern India.

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*Correction.* The reference on page 96 of Vol. II, No. 2 (under section 7 of the Notes on philosophy and religion) to the *Enciclopedia Italiana* was unfortunately inaccurate; the work in question is the *Enciclopedia Cattolica Italiana*.

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